THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 14 October, 1932 Number 10

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The Hesitant Materialist

CLEMENS DUTT

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Rising Strike Movement—Recovery Lies—Intensified Attack—Deepening Crisis—No Peaceful Recovery—Towards a Violent Outcome—Stock Exchange Gambling—Inflation Moves—Moves to Raise Prices—War Moves—Renewed Capitalist Offensive—Workers' Rising Resistance—Revolutionary Implications—Capitalist Manœuvres—Labour Bureaucracy's Rôle—Newcastle Trades Union Congress—Rising Opposition—Who Shall Lead?—Leicester Labour Party Conference—New Policy Humbug—The "End of Reformism"—Capitalist Economy Policy—The Fight for Leadership

THE Lancashire cotton strike is the signal of a new, desperate, rising wave of struggle, which will inevitably grow in force through the coming winter. The rising strike movement in the different industries against the employers' new attacks ; the struggles of the unemployed, and the mass demonstrations and conflicts in the industrial centres : all these are signals of a wave of elementary revolt against intolerable conditions, against the ever-growing crisis, against the failure of the government and of the labour leadership to make any attempt to deal with the crisis, against the ever-renewed worsening of conditions. The movement is still in form an economic defensive movement, an elementary struggle for the bare means of life. It is not yet a conscious revolutionary movement, a conscious struggle against the crisis and the causes of the crisis, against capitalism, for the workers' conquest of power and the workers' solution of the crisis. This outlook is still only reached by the small, but growing, minority of the workers, the militant vanguard. But the bare determination of the mass to fight, against every obstacle and every argument, in the face of government repression and violence, in the face of all the warnings and exhortations of the entire labour leadership proclaiming the impossibility of

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struggling under the present conditions, in face of all the economic arguments of the bankruptcy of trade and industry and the impossibility of paying more ; this bare determination, this refusal to accept further worsening of standards, the solidarity, enthusiasm and even aggressive activity in the fight (mass-pickets, conflicts with the police, &c.) *already contain the germs of the offensive, of the revolutionary answer to the crisis, which it is the task of the revolutionary vanguard to deepen and strengthen and make conscious in the development of the struggle.* This powerful impulse of the mass is already shaking the ground under the feet of the Labour and trade union leadership, as was seen last month at the Newcastle Trades Union Congress, and as will be seen further through the proceedings at the Labour Party Conference at Leicester ; hoary old Privy Councillors begin to mumble unfamiliar phrases of " Revolution, not Reform," &c., or to proclaim their " support " of strikes they have done their best to prevent and for whose defeat they are working overtime. This situation of rising mass struggle, of renewed capitalist attacks, and of new " left " manœuvres of the labour bureaucracy, indicate that a new stage of the working class movement is opening, of critical importance for the revolutionary line and leadership.

IT is vital at this turn of the situation, at this new stage of deepening crisis and of the working class struggle, to keep a clear view of the situation, of the forces in play, and of the consequent line of working class advance. At the present moment the capitalists and the labour leadership are endeavouring to turn aside the eyes of the masses from the realities facing them by an outburst of talk on every side of " Recovery," of " Revival," of " The Turn of the Tide " and " The End of the Crisis." Thus the *Daily Telegraph* comes out with glaring headlines (September 7, 1932) :

> WORLD-WIDE SIGNS OF GROWING TRADE CONFIDENCE.
>
> From all parts of the world yesterday came reports indicating a mounting spirit of trade optimism and the feeling that at last the tide of depression had turned.

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The *Daily Mail*, on its side, proclaims with a full-page streamer (September 5, 1932):

> THE WORLD ON THE WAY TO RECOVERY.
>
> The success of Great Britain's £2,000,000,000 War Loan Conversion has set the world's feet on the path to recovery from the worst economic depression in its history.
>
> In this country security values have increased by £500,000,000, and manufacturers are laying in stocks of raw materials in readiness for a revival of trade.
>
> World commodity prices are rising, and other signs of reawakening confidence are:
>
> United States: An increase of £800,000,000 during August in stock values.

The *Economist* judges more cautiously (September 17, 1932):

> IS IT REVIVAL?
>
> If economic considerations alone are to be taken into account, there would in our opinion be sufficient grounds for thinking that we had definitely entered upon an upward phase of business conditions.

Finally, the Trades Union Congress, following as usual in the wake of capitalist propaganda, echoes the same notion, according to the report of the Industrial correspondent of the *Daily Herald* on the basis of "conversations with delegates":

> There seems a very general conviction that the blizzard will and must soon pass.
>
> *Daily Herald*, September 5, 1932).

ALL this talk of Recovery is a direct deception to turn aside the masses from the vital issues of the crisis and of the struggle which confronts them, to chloroform their rising anger and fighting spirit with illusory hopes. It is not only that the facts so far still reveal a very different picture, of still falling trade and rising unemployment, up to and including the August figures. It is not only that the main evidence put forward, the evidence of Stock Exchange rises or a rise in commodity prices, not based on any rise in production or trade, are in fact evidence of a very different process, of speculation based on credit-inflation, which can only lead to intensification

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of the crisis. *What is most important is that just these manifestations, which are put forward as evidence of recovery, the manipulations on the stock exchange or for a rise in prices, are in reality direct instruments and weapons of the intensified attack on the workers and the petit-bourgeoisie*, which is the actual character of the present stage of the crisis. Not improving conditions, but intensified attack—this is the reality facing the workers.

WHAT is the evidence put forward by the propagandists of Recovery? There is no suggestion of any sign of increased consumption, of new markets, of rising trade, that is to say, of any step towards solving the basic dilemma of the present enlarged productive forces under the conditions of capitalism. There is no suggestion of any sign of rising production or employment. On the contrary, the facts so far still move in the opposite direction. The August trade figures showed British exports at the lowest level of the current year, 2 per cent. below a year ago, and 33 per cent. below two years ago. The registered unemployment figures for August of 2,859,000 showed an increase of 48,000 on July, and of 126,000 on a year ago, despite the heavy effects of cutting off over half-a-million from benefit (157,000 by the Anomalies Act, and 370,000 by the Means Test). The *Economist* is compelled to admit that the suggested basis for recovery is largely " psychological " (September 3, 1932) :

> The basis for recovery is as yet somewhat intangible, and evidence of increased consumption or expanding industrial activity is hitherto lacking. . . . Visible supplies of leading raw materials remain exceptionally heavy.

Certainly, a point must be reached at some stage in the process of decline, when the cutting down of production and gradual using up of stocks necessarily leads, unless more rapid factors intervene to change the whole course, to the slow beginning of an alternative movement, not because of any new markets or basic increase of consumption, but solely for the replenishment of stocks and to maintain the existing low level. Even assuming, as the *Economist* endeavours to argue, that certain

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diminutions of stocks may now be expected to lead to certain upward movements of demand for replenishment, it is obvious that such a process could have no character of recovery or solution of the crisis ; since there would still be no scope for the full use of present productive forces, but only a slight easing of the existing restriction, an easing which, as soon as there is a rush to take advantage of it, would rapidly give place to a new jamming. As the *Economist* is forced to admit in the same article :

> Unless there were a sustained recovery of consumption, any considerable advance in commodity prices would be likely to elicit a relaxation of restrictions on output sufficient to swamp markets once more in glut.

THIS dilemma, which confronts capitalism to-day on a scale so far exceeding any previous crisis as to make no longer comparable the " normal " process of any previous crisis, makes less and less likely a peaceful solution of the present crisis, and more and more certain a violent solution : that is, either the workers' struggle will advance to the point of revolution, or else, if the workers' movement is not yet strong enough for this, the capitalist outcome will be war ; in either case the present crisis only gives place to a new cycle of wars and revolutions. Previous crises were able the more easily to pass into a process of gradual upward movement through depression to recovery, first because the productive forces were still far less developed, and therefore the disproportion between production and consumption was far less, and more rapidly giving place to new equilibrium and rising demand, which could not as rapidly be overtaken ; and second because this process was in practice always assisted by the opening of new markets, either through the conquest for capitalism of new regions of the world, or through the further capitalist penetration of agrarian regions and pressing back of pre-capitalist industry. But the present crisis differs from all previous crises : first, because it takes place on the basis of the general crisis of capitalism ; second because in place of any easy solution through new markets, the capitalist division

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of the world is already completed and has even begun to give place to a contrary process, in which one-sixth of the earth, the Soviet Union, has already emancipated itself from capitalism, while a further fifth of the world's population, China, representing the principal still unconquered region, offers growing resistance to capitalist penetration ; and third, because the productive forces have so enormously developed that even after three years of unparalleled unemployment, strangled production, and destruction of goods, stocks remain at an enormously high level, and any slight upward movement of demand for replenishment can only give place very rapidly to a new glut and renewed crisis. As the *Times Trade Supplement* finds itself forced to recognise (July 23, 1932) :

> If the two-and-a-half millions of unemployed were absorbed in factory occupations the national output of manufactured articles would then be on such a scale that the available buying markets . . . would be inadequate to absorb it. Hence, if such a method of labour absorption could and did take place, it would only precipitate a new crisis.

THUS the propaganda of recovery, of the peaceful ending of the crisis, of the advance to better conditions, is not only not justified by any actual facts so far of even such slight upward movement as could be possible. So far as that goes, a slight upward movement could at some point, as we have seen, take place, and yet not mean in any sense an ending of the crisis. But the propaganda of recovery is far more basically false than any question of a mere comparison of this month's figures and last month's figures. The whole conception of a peaceful harmonious recovery from the crisis is false. In the actual play of forces it is increasingly manifest that there is no possibility of a peaceful harmonious solution of the crisis. The present productive forces cannot be peacefully organised within the existing capitalist framework. The crisis drives to a violent outcome, ever more completely destroying capitalist stabilisation and opening out a new cycle of wars and revolutions. The capitalist " solution " of the crisis means renewed and intensified attacks upon the workers, chronic large-scale unemployment, and eventually war.

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THE very evidence which is brought forward by the propagandists of recovery, the evidence of colossal fortune-making in gambling on security values, or of an upward movement in prices, is in fact evidence of a very contrary process. If these processes rested on even the first signs of an upward movement in trade and production, then they might more easily be diagnosed in these " normal " terms of recovery. But it is notorious that they have accompanied an actual continued downward movement in trade and production, and are directly associated, not only with speculation, but with conscious government manœuvres to stimulate them. It is claimed that the pockets of the British capitalists have been enriched by £500 millions in one month, and of the American by £800 millions. This paper fortune-making, divorced from production, and shamelessly carried on at the same time as the driving down of the workers to the depths of poverty and demanding of yet more sacrifices, is then actually held up to the same workers to applaud as evidence of returning prosperity. In fact, the movement is admitted to rest on two main factors : first, the American credit-inflation policy, described in the leading German industrial journal, the *Deutsche Bergwerkszeitung* (August 11, 1932) as the " gambler's last throw " ; and second, the British Conversion Loan, whose exposure is now fully demonstrated as a method to enrich the big capitalists.

WHAT do these two processes represent in fact ? The first means that by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and succeeding measures thousands of millions of dollars of credit have been extended to save the banks and buy up state paper and frozen credits, thus in fact releasing an enormous volume of paper capital to seek new investments ; but the very absence of any productive outlets for new investment means that the demand for existing securities is thus artificially stimulated and the price forced up. This " boom " on the American Stock Exchange extends to other countries, as the investors of other countries seek to take advantage of it. It is obvious that this " boom " bears

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no relation to production, but is on the contrary based, not only on inflation measures, but on the actual decline of production and absence of productive outlets. Similarly, with the "success" of the Conversion Loan. This "success" means that the overwhelming majority of the holders of the two thousand million pounds of five per cent. loan see no hope of getting a better return on their money in December than three-and-a-half per cent. owing to the absolute stagnation of all productive enterprise, and have accordingly converted. The consequence is of course a rise in value for all existing securities bringing in a higher return. In this way the small investor who has placed his savings in War Loan is successfully subjected to heavy loss; while the big capitalists make an enormous net gain on the total value of their holdings (£500 millions net gain in capital values, as against a loss of £23 millions a year in interest, largely borne by small investors).

IT is evident that these movements actually reflect, not any sign of tendency to rising production, but, on the contrary, the stagnation of production, the absence of any productive outlet. There is no increase in production, in wealth; the paper increase represents only at the most the hope and intention to extract increased surplus value in the future from the workers. In this sense the nominal £500 millions rise in the fortunes of the rich in Britain is no contrast to the simultaneous driving down of the mass of the population to extreme poverty, but its counterpart; the two are parts of one process. Similarly, with the tendency to rising prices. If this were a reflection of rising demand, it might be interpreted as evidence of an upward movement out of the crisis. But if it is only the reflection of speculation and inflation, then it takes on a very different character. It becomes part of the attack on the workers, through inflation, through the artificial raising of prices, to cut all real wages. For this all the capitalist governments, all the capitalist economists, and all the Labour reformists have continuously prayed, have urged and advocated as the great solution of the crisis, if measures could be

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internationally concerted to raise prices, that is to say, to cut the wages of all workers with one stroke. Thus the measures which are proclaimed as evidence of recovery have in fact a very opposite significance; are measures of intensified attack upon the workers, are measures of a gambling and desperate character, intensifying all antagonisms, intensifying the international crisis, and hastening the advance to a violent outcome.

THE international situation bears out this character of the present stage. On the one side we have the open fiasco of the Disarmament Conference and the question of German re-arming as the centre of the situation. On the other side we have the Japanese confirmation of their seizure of Manchuria by the recognition of their puppet state of Manchukuo, and their threat to extend their aggression to Mongolia. Both these movements, which constitute the two focussing points of the present international situation, are movements of a direct war character. And both have obvious significance in relation to the forming of the armed front against the Soviet Union. The German move appears at the outset to push to the front the Franco-German antagonism. But in fact both the von Papen Government and the Nazis have made sufficiently clear in their public pronouncements that their policy is peace on the West and war on the East. And British policy, which has consistently supported the move to the re-arming of the German ruling class, only makes a sudden apparent change to opposition when there appears danger of a break with France. The object of the complicated British manœuvring, at once to secure French co-operation and the re-arming of a reaction-ruled Germany, for the formation of a single bloc against the Soviet Union, stands out ever more clearly. At the same time, the Japanese move, while favoured by Britain and France as military preparation against the Soviet Union, forces forward the Anglo-American antagonism, already sharpening over the debts question, over the World Economic Conference project, and over Ottawa (estimated by the Washington authorities to represent a loss of £60 millions to United

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States trade). The twelve months since the Japanese occupation of Mukden have thus seen a steady advance in the imperialist antagonisms and growing war-character of the crisis.

IN close association with this goes forward the intensified attack on the workers, heavier than ever before, and giving the lie to all talk of recovery and improvement. In fact, the capitalist hopes of recovery are based on the assumption of the intensified attack on the workers. The von Papen Government promulgates its September Emergency Decree for an all-round cut of 12½–20 per cent. in wages, accompanied by enormous subsidies to the capitalists; and it is on this basis that "sudden expectations of a brisk trade revival, stimulated by the Government's reconstruction programme" are reported by the *Daily Telegraph* from Germany among its "World-wide Signs of Growing Trade Confidence" (September 7, 1932). Similarly, the National Government in Britain prepares new economy measures, and even a possible emergency budget in the autumn, alongside the employers' new attacks in each industry. Against the background of the menacing international situation and feverish war preparations go forward the intensified attacks upon the workers, through tariffs, through economy, through measures to raise prices, and through speeding-up and wage cuts. These are the realities which the workers have to face. and which all the capitalist propaganda of revival and recovery cannot conceal.

THE workers' rising movement of revolt, which now spreads in England and in every country (Belgian miners' strike, American miners' strike, German Communist advance) is the workers' answer to this situation, which points already forward to the alternative path from the crisis, the path of the workers' fight. The struggle at its present point to-day is an elementary struggle for the barest standards of life. But under the present conditions such a struggle already goes beyond any normal economic conflicts, as is seen

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already in the intensity of the fight, in the continuous activity of the state forces, and in the enthusiasm of the entire working class behind the cotton strikers. All the propaganda of capitalism, including through the Labour Movement, is united to declare that it is " economically impossible " for industry to meet the workers' demands, that the struggle is " hopeless," that the only " practical " course is to make a compromise. " We fear a reduction of wages is now inevitable " writes even as late as July 1st the *New Leader*, the organ of the " left " I.L.P., on the Lancashire situation, where even as late as August 19 it finds only " blacklegging " and " demoralisation " —on the very eve of unexampled struggle and solidarity. The old textile leader, Tom Shaw, writes across three columns in the *Daily Herald* (August 24, 1932) :

> Nothing but disaster could come of a protracted stoppage. . . . No amount of trade union action whatever under present conditions can get more than it is humanly possible can be given. . . .
>
> Will sturdy commonsense assert itself and negotiations be recommenced, with employers deliberately determined to get back into their factories as quickly as possible all those who are now outside, and with workers determined on their part that if they receive a square deal they will listen to and act reasonably upon the arguments put before them from the other side.

THIS is the language of the old Labour and trade union leadership, who can see only through capitalist spectacles, who would limit the rôle of the trade unions to bargaining on the basis of the trade and export returns, who can see all the " impossibility " for capitalism to pay, but none of the impossibility for the workers to exist under starvation conditions. They do not see that their whole basis of stable capitalist industry is gone by the board, that their whole calculus is obsolete, that the workers' struggle has entered on to a new and far more serious stage, that the workers must fight, however unfavourable the conditions may seem to an old trade union negotiator, or go under, and that the course they recommend, the course of surrender and arbitration, however much profit and decorations it may bring to the old

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Labour leadership at the hands of capitalism, has brought only starvation and ruin to the workers. The fight for bread is forced upon the workers; and the fight for bread becomes more and more revolutionary in its implications. The refusal of the workers to accept all these arguments of the economic experts, capitalist and Labour, their determination to fight, their unity in the fight *shows how enormously they are in advance of the entire Labour leadership*, "*left*" *included*, how far more practically they are approaching the issues along the only line that can lead forward, the line of the workers' fight, and how they are entering on the path that leads forward, as the struggle develops and extends and the consciousness of the issues deepens, to the revolutionary fight against capitalism for the workers' solution of the crisis.

CAPITALISM, in the face of the strength of the workers' resistance, is compelled to manœuvre, to shift its ground, to make a show of concessions. The spinning employers' postponement of their wage-cut demands and new negotiations on a basis of lower demands; the bus companies' withdrawal of their wage-cut demands in order to concentrate on the speeding-up demands; the Birkenhead increased scales of relief; all these are evidence of the process. These are no evidence yet of victory, although they already demonstrate the superiority of the workers' weapon, of the workers' method, to the Mondist method of the Labour bureaucracy, which has brought only defeat and losses. But they are still strategic moves of capitalism, to vary the attack, to postpone what cannot be immediately put through, to break up the workers' resistance. At this point the Labour bureaucracy, which has hastened forward to "support" the strike movement after preaching against all strikes, hastens now to applaud the concessions, and to urge immediate settlement on this basis, surrendering all the other issues. This is the critical testing point. If this is successful, the struggle is broken up; the entire capitalist attack will be put through at the moment favourable to capitalism. Only if the workers are able to

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maintain their fighting front unbroken for their full demands, only if they are able to realise their own independent leadership to maintain the stand for their demands, only so can the struggle go forward to victory. The fight between the Labour bureaucracy and the revolutionary opposition for the leadership of the struggle is vital, alike for the immediate struggle, and for the whole future of the movement.

THE significance alike of the Newcastle Trades Union Congress and of the Leicester Labour Party Conference lies in relation to the rising wave of working class struggle. In the face of the rising movement, the Labour bureaucracy has to adapt its tone and its tactics in order to maintain control. We have already noted a couple of months back the rising tide of " left " gestures throughout the leadership of the Second International : Vandervelde's " revolutionary " declarations of action in the event of war ; the speeches at the International Transport Workers' Congress ; in the Labour Party, the declarations of the " end of gradualism," condemnations of the late Labour Government, and proclamations of a " bold socialist policy " ; separation of the Independent Labour Party and proclamation of a " revolutionary Marxist " programme ; in the trade unions, the " militant " presidential addresses at the Railwaymen's Conference and Engineers' Conference, and official acceptance of resolutions for shorter hours and increased wages. All these indications already reflected the rising mass struggle, and the endeavour of the Second International leadership to circumvent it with valueless phrases and gestures, concealing real opposition to the struggle.

AT the Newcastle Trades Union Congress, which was held under the dominating shadow of the Lancashire Cotton Strike, a further stage of development was reached. The revolutionary opposition was only directly represented by a handful of delegates and sympathisers ; but the influence of the rising mass struggle, symbolised also in the mass demonstration of the unemployed outside the Congress overhung the proceedings. The General Council leadership,

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which had for years preached industrial peace, proclaimed its friendship with capitalism and denounced strikes, found itself compelled to propose a financial fund for the support of the cotton strike. Its spokesmen tried to voice militant phrases for the overthrow of capitalism. The President, Bromley, fresh from the service of imperialism at Ottawa, declared that "the capitalist system of society requires far more than patching," and called for its "final destruction." Lansbury, for the Labour Party, proclaimed the aim "not to reform, but to revolutionise the capitalist system." Cramp darkly averred that "I do not believe that the next two winters will pass and find the present industrial order in existence."

NEVERTHELESS, it was difficult for these "militant" phrases to carry far, while the policy of Mondism remained the official policy. Strong opposition votes were registered on a series of points against the lead of the General Council. On the Tariffs report an opposition of 934,000 was recorded; for the admission of the unemployed deputation, 963,000; against the joint memorandum with the Federation of British Industries on Ottawa, 842,000. The Report on the Control of Industry, which had marked an extreme stage in the adoption of an open capitalist policy, was only finally accepted on an assurance that it would not be regarded as the adopted policy of the Congress; while a resolution for the stopping of munitions to Japan was only circumvented by the device of the "previous question." All these votes and decisions are important signs. It was noticeable that in several of these points of opposition a section of the upper trade union bureaucracy took part in the opposition and even took the lead; thus the rejection of the Tariff Report was moved by Naylor, the Secretary of the London Society of Compositors, while the proposal to receive the unemployed deputation was first made by Sir Ben Turner. It is obvious that we are not here faced so far with any question of a split in the bureaucracy, but only with a very normal peaceful division of rôles, to circumvent the rising workers' opposition.

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The only consistent fight against the General Council line and the whole line of Mondism was made by the revolutionary trade union opposition (Minority Movement and supporters). The official line of the Congress remained the full line of Mondism, of capitalist reorganisation, of complete refusal to concern itself with the problems and tactics of the strike movement, of exclusion of the unemployed by the protection of the police, of support of the Hoover proposals against the Soviet Disarmament proposals, of refusal to stop munitions for war, &c. The strengthening of the fight against this line depends on the strengthening of the revolutionary trade union opposition.

THE rôle of the reformist Labour bureaucracy is to *stabilise* the workers' movement within the limits of capitalism, in the words of the Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, Citrine, in an article written on the eve of the Congress under the title " Trade Unionism—the Bulwark Against Chaos " (*Reynolds's News*, September 4, 1932) :

> Without the trade unions industry under modern conditions could not function effectively . . . endless confusion and disorganisation would result, and embittered conflicts would ensue.

Similarly, Bromley, in his Chairman's Address to the Trades Union Congress, described the rôle of the trade unions in the capitalist crisis :

> Trade Unionism had been a stabilising factor in an economic situation which had progressively deteriorated all the world over.

In a period while capitalism strongly holds the upper hand, this policy reveals itself most openly as Mondism, direct alliance with the employers, preaching of industrial peace, and war on all militant workers. In a period of strongly rising workers' struggle, this same policy has to alter its tactics ; Mondism is passed into the background ; and an attempt is made to meet the mood of the worker, and to take up the leadership of the rising movement in order to confine it within the minimum limits within capitalism. Although the one line may appear more " militant " than the other, they are part of the same policy, of the same service to capitalism, differing

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only according to the conditions and methods required to control the workers. The success of the workers' struggle depends on their power to break through this control and realise their own independent leadership. If the reformist trade union bureaucracy succeeds in fixing its hold on the present rising movement, and confining it within the bounds of a limited, economic sectional movement, the struggle will be defeated. Only revolutionary leadership, developing the fight without flinching on every front, can both lead the present immediate struggle to success, and can carry the fight forward to the fight against capitalism and the capitalist crisis. This is the supreme issue at the present moment. For this purpose it is essential to expose and defeat the " left " manœuvres of the trade union bureaucracy, and to build up the revolutionary trade union opposition, which is based at once directly on the workers' struggle and on the workers' opposition in the unions. This question of leadership is the critical question before the present rising workers' movement.

IF we turn to the Leicester Labour Party Conference we see a similar picture. All the Labour Party leaders are engaged in denouncing " reformism," in denouncing " gradualism "—in denouncing, that is to say, all they have preached to the workers from the beginning. Some speak of " Revolution, not Reform " ; others speak of " A Bold Socialist Policy," " Socialism and Nothing But Socialism," " Never Again a Minority Government," &c. All the past of the Labour Party is thrown on to the shoulders of MacDonald and Snowden, as if the entire remaining leadership did not bear responsibility for every single act. The ex-Ministers throw a veil of silence on the late Labour Government (" There is little to be gained by holding a coroner's inquest on the corpse of the Labour Government."—A. Greenwood, " A Year Ago To-day," in the *Daily Herald*, August 23, 1932). Every attempt is made to convince the workers that the Labour Party is born anew, spotless of all its shameful past of betrayal of the workers in every sphere ; as if the same old Henderson,

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Clynes and company, familiar Ministers of His Majesty since the old war cabinets of nearly a score of years ago, had suddenly turned a new leaf and become militant socialists, burning tribunes of the people for the overthrow of capitalism.

ALL this nauseating humbug would not be worth serious discussion save as a complete self-exposure of the whole past record, policy and claim to leadership of the Labour Party, and indeed of the whole dishonest, Tammany character of the official Labour Party and its policy, were it not that there is in fact something more involved than the usual cheapjack appeal to credulity. So far as the actual policy put forward behind all the shouting goes, there is at first sight nothing new : it is the same old box of pills (Banking, Electricity, Transport, Agriculture), far behind even the old *Labour and the New Social Order* in any pretence of an attack on capitalism ; the usual prescriptions of capitalist reorganisation, public utility companies and the rest of it, as churned out from the same factory for years. The principal supposed new feature, the " nationalisation of banking " is in fact only a variation on the old formulas : establishment of the Bank of England as a public body, with the Governor under the Cabinet, &c. This revolutionary proposal, it may be noted, has the blessing of the Liberal capitalist economist, Keynes, who declares his full support of it, and concludes his declaration of support with the equivocal remark :

> With the personalities the same, and knowledge no greater, it might not have made much difference if the machinery which the Labour Party desires had been in operation during the last ten years.
>
> *New Statesman and Nation*, September 17, 1932.)

BUT there is something more in the shouting of the " End of Reformism " than might at first meet the eye. Unlikely, as it might at first appear, they are for once in just this shouting something that runs close to the truth. For there is a sense in which their cry of the " End of Reformism " is true, although not in the sense in which they wish the workers to understand it. It is not true in the sense

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of the Advance to Revolution. *But it is true in the sense of the Retreat from Reform.* This is the more clearly revealed, the more the actual typical declarations are examined in closer detail. Take first the following statement of the new Deputy Leader, Sir Stafford Cripps ;

> The Labour Party has undoubtedly suffered in the past from its repeated attempts to bring amelioration to the lot of the working classes within the capitalist system. These efforts have led many people to regard its aim as being organised state charity rather than a fundamental change of the whole economic system. *An undue insistence upon the importance of the amount and the administration of the unemployment benefit, old age pensions, workmen's compensation and similar matters* has tended to mask the far more important features of the party programme. The failure of such expedients either to bring about socialism or to make the capitalist system tolerable has now been fully demonstrated, and it is essential that the party in its approach to the electorate should place the fullest emphasis upon its economic programme of co-operative planning and control as an alternative to the present basis of finance and industry. (Sir Stafford Cripps, " The Future of the Labour Party," *New Statesman and Nation*, September 3, 1932.—italics added.)

Here we have the full echo of MacDonald's famous preface. Down with Poplarism ! No more demoralising " state charity." No more " undue insistence " about the exact amount of unemployment benefit. Instead, concentrate on the necessities of capitalist reorganisation. It is only necessary to look at this to see that here we have the exact echo of the present line of capitalism.

THIS is no isolated instance. It recurs in a continuous line in every leading utterance. Note already the declaration of Susan Lawrence in her Chairman's Address to the Labour Women's Conference (*Daily Herald*, June 15, 1932) :

> The time has come to *abandon palliatives* and undertake construction : to replace the old system instead of trying to amend it.
>
> Circumstances have changed now, and *the social legislation of the last Labour Government was almost certainly the last attempt which will ever be made along such lines.*

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Or again Herbert Morrison writes on " Reform or Revolution ? " (*New Clarion*, August 20, 1932) :

> The first thing to settle is whether social reform under capitalism has limitations or not. Nearly every socialist will at once say " Yes." But it must be confessed that in past Party discussions it has tacitly been almost assumed that the reverse is the truth, and of course it isn't.

He goes on to insist on the importance of showing that there is a " *limit to the taxation of the rich for the benefit of the poor*," and that therefore it is necessary to " put socialism first "—as illustrated in his London Passenger Transport Bill ! Or, again, Cole writes on " The Social Services " (*New Clarion*, August 20, 1932) :

> In the past practical Labour policy has been largely concentrated on the development of the social services. . . . But it has become increasingly obvious of late years that there *are limits to the growth of the social services under existing conditions*. . . . The plain fact is that under capitalist system there is no way—or none has yet been used—of taxing the rich as they should be taxed without adverse reactions on industry and employment.

Or, again, Shinwell writes, scenting the danger of a too complete abandonment of the old reform arguments (*New Clarion*, September 17, 1932) :

> The Labour Movement is as variable as the weather. Before the last election nine-tenths of us, including members of the late Government, endorsed the reform policy of the MacDonald Cabinet, defending it against all comers. Now we profess nothing but contempt for it.

THE " new line " of the Labour Party, beneath its would-be militant pretences, is only too transparent, and is revealed as the most complete subservience to the present stage of capitalism and its attack upon the workers. Capitalism demands economy, demands the cutting down of the social services, the tightening up of administration, the concentration on the interests of capitalist industry and the rentiers (the National Debt). The Labour Party hastens to conform. In the final period of capitalist decay, the margin for reforms, for concessions, dwindles and grows narrower.

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Reformism has to carry on its work of corruption with a dwindling stock of reforms, has even to reverse the engines and cut down what has already been given. At the same time the workers, in growing discontent, demand a more militant fight, a basic fight against capitalism. The Labour Party, the go-between of capitalism and the workers, hastens to combine the two necessary processes. Adopting a militant tone before the workers, it proclaims, in the name of the new militancy, the end of reforms. Thus we reach the final stage of Reformism. In this final stage, even the fight for " reforms," that is, for daily needs and daily bread, can only be fought by the revolutionaries. Alike with the Labour Party leadership, and with the trade union leadership, the lesson at the present period, and in relation to the present rising movement is the same. Only the revolutionary line and leadership, only Communism, can show the way forward for the present rising movement in the conditions of deepening capitalist crisis, both for the immediate struggle and for the final struggle against capitalism and for the conquest of the crisis.

R. P. D.

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RETREATING FROM COMMUNISM?

By ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

THE end of the first Five Year Plan is three months off. It has been carried out in four years. The Soviet Union has become a country in which industry predominates instead of agriculture, and accounts in 1932 for 66 per cent. of national output instead of 45 per cent. as in 1927-28. The industry of the country has radically changed its character: engineering and machine-building—the key to economic independence, because it renders possible the development of all other industries—accounted for 18 per cent. of the industrial output in 1931, instead of 7½ per cent. as in 1912. And industrial output is more than double what it was in 1912.

Industrial development has made possible the complete reconstruction of agriculture. In the chief grain areas of the country the rich peasants (kulaks) have been practically wiped out as a class. Last year the Soviet (or State) farms disposed on the market of nearly as much grain as the wealthy kulak class had in 1927. More than three-fifths of the peasantry are in the collective farms—co-operative enterprises working on State-owned land, and thus representing the definite entry of the mass of the peasantry upon the road to Socialism. In 1928 the collective farms produced 2 per cent. of the country's grain; in 1931 they produced 60 per cent. The Soviet and collective farms between them, thanks to the machinery supplied by State industry, have this year (1932) sown 80 per cent. of all cultivated areas—and 27 million acres more than last year.

Every capitalist country has been racked with crisis during the last two years—seeing factories and pits shut down, trade depression, millions of starving unemployed, weaker workers increasing the number of suicides, the stronger majority seeking a way out in flaming anger against the capitalists, strikes, hunger marches, demonstrations, riots, barricades. But the opposite has been the case in the Soviet Union. The feature of the last 12 months has been the leap forward of industry. Over 200 new industrial undertakings were opened in the heavy industries alone. They included eight huge blast furnaces, giant tractor and motor works, the greatest ball-bearings factory in the world. The basic capital of industry—buildings, machinery, equipment—which in 1931 increased by 24 per cent. in comparison with the previous year, has increased in 1932 by the huge figure of 44 per cent. on 1931. Output also has increased in the first half-year of 1932, of all industry by 19½ per cent., of the engineering industry by 35 per cent., the coal mining industry by 20 per

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cent., of iron by 27 per cent., steel 11 per cent., cotton 21 per cent., clothing 19 per cent. The U.S.S.R., once a producer of coarse cotton goods, coal and raw iron, now manufactures turret lathes, coal cutters, rolling mills, aluminium, cotton pickers, rubber. There is no unemployment, nor the slightest prospect of any.

These shattering figures and facts have created a deep impression even on capitalist minds. Not a day passes without some tribute to the success of the Five Year Plan, painfully wrung from the bitter enemies of Communism. The other week Mr. A. P. M. Fleming, of Metropolitan-Vickers, testified to the achievements of Bolshevism in the sanctuary of capitalist science itself—the British Association—arousing the frenzy of a pack of old fools who showed, by their pride in their own abysmal ignorance of the facts, that science is not independent of the class struggle.

Nor are the capitalists able entirely to conceal the fact that these results have been obtained in a country where there are no capitalists, where the workers are the ruling class, the standard of living is steadily rising, women get the same pay as men for the same work, children are cared for as nowhere else in the world, education up to the highest stage is literally the prerogative of the masses, and—most potent of all in an era of world crisis—the workers have a 7-hour day, free insurance and no fear of unemployment. The Watford Coroner, Mr. R. A. Godman, tells the *West Herts Post* (August 11, 1932): "Under the present Communist Government, the workers have made tremendous strides, both materially and in providing for education, culture and recreation." John Calder, a Canadian consulting engineer at Magnitogorsk, says to the *Toronto Star* (May 21, 1932): "When I read the bunk that's printed in North American papers about Russia, that's the only time I see red . . . There never was anything like the effort of Russia in world's history . . . I wish you could see what has been achieved in the past four years. . . . Things may be cut down, rations may be small, but the men and their wives will eat, the horses will eat, the camels will eat. No one will suffer." These are two examples out of many.

Nevertheless, the capitalist class has no intention of sitting down tamely, with all its huge machinery of propaganda—schools, "pictures," newspapers, radio—and allowing the truth about the Soviet Union come unhindered to the knowledge of the working class. The great achievements of Socialist construction have stimulated in recent months great new efforts on the part of the professional liars and poisoners of public opinion. A typical case is that of the *Daily Express*. This great capitalist firm, connected directly with the Canadian timber interests which are fighting Soviet timber, paid a journalist to visit the Soviet Union and write a series of articles revealing "the truth at last." When he

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took the firm at its word, it suppressed the articles, and instead screamed about "riots" at Ivanovo-Voznesensk which never occurred. Starving people, financial breakdown, failure of plans, chaos and corruption, riots and executions, slave labour, plots to murder Stalin—all the old familiar lies have been brought out again by practically the whole of the capitalist press during the last few months, as the capitalist crisis grew more desperate.

Most insistent of all, this year, has been the cry that "Russia is retreating from Communism." Unabashed, the same newspapers and politicians who proclaimed that retreat in 1921, directly the civil war in Russia ended and the new economic policy began, proclaim it again in 1932, when the last stronghold of private capitalism in the Soviet Union—the kulak class—has been smashed. They are seconded by "Labour" politicians and journalists, such as the Cramps, who inform the world that "workers control has been tried in Russia and proved a failure," and the Hamilton Fyfes, who announce in *Reynolds's* that the Five Year Plan has been forced on the "resigned and malleable population" by a small number of intellectuals, because "obedience is in the Russian blood." They are seconded by the Trotskyists—unabashed by the failure of their leaders' prophecies, in 1925 ("Towards Socialism or Capitalism?") that the U.S.S.R. would not have its own basic industries during the next few years, and that, becoming more and more a part of the world market, the U.S.S.R. would more and more suffer depression and enjoy booms when the capitalist countries did. All of them seize with delight upon every difficulty and every reverse encountered in the fight for the Five Year Plan and for Socialism.

Are there difficulties? Are there reverses? Of course there are. Building Socialism is not such an easy job as writing slanders against the workers of the U.S.S.R.

Notwithstanding the huge increase compared with last year, the programme for the first six months of 1932 was not carried out in many branches of industry. Industrial output as a whole was 83.7 per cent. of programme, heavy industry 81.8 per cent., light industry 89.9 per cent.: the Donetz coalfield produced 23.3 million tons of coal, which was 4 million tons more than last year, but 4 million tons less than programme: the average monthly output of rolled steel sank from 409,000 tons in January, 1932, to 311,000 tons in July—less than the average for 1931: only 35 per cent. of the programme of output of spare parts for tractors was fulfilled, and 14.5 per cent. for mechanical coalcutters, in the first five months of the year: wages in heavy industry rose between January and April to 22.5 per cent. above the level of last year, but the output per worker increased by only 11.2 per cent. instead of 31 per cent., as planned. These are some of the outstanding reverses in the fight for

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Socialism—which only people of little confidence in the mighty forces and abilities of the working class would try to hide. And the capitalists who use—and misuse—these facts in their anti-Soviet propaganda would be glad enough if their own economic system had only *such* reverses to cope with.

For what is the character of these reverses? Are they symptoms of a decaying and declining system—of loss of markets, artificial restriction of production, raw materials rotting while factories are idle, of millions on the streets, as in Great Britain and the capitalist countries? Not in the least. They are the reverses of a working class which has seized the whole wealth and means of production, and is learning by practical experience how to use them for the benefit of the whole people. In the steel industry, blast furnaces are not being used effectively enough, and fuel is being wasted: in the cement industry, work of whole plants has been held up for lack of a cable or failure of current at a crucial moment: costly modern machinery for the timber industry has been left standing idle: the building and the coalmining industries have been taking on too many workers, instead of training and employing more effectively those they have: "equalising of wages" as between skilled and unskilled workers, under-spending by factory managements on safety appliances and housing amenities, etc., etc.

But the very recital of these reasons shows that they have nothing in common with the mysterious "economic blizzard" which is still the despair of the capitalist economists, as it was eighteen months ago. The reasons for the economic difficulties in the U.S.S.R., and the practical methods of fighting them, were lucidly analysed last year by Stalin in his famous "Six Points" which have become the daily watchword and workman's pocket companion for every revolutionary worker, factory director, trade union militant, engineer, brigade leader in a collective farm, and Communist in the Soviet Union. Moreover, for all the difficulties and reverses, the broad results mentioned above remain—which means that innumerable examples could be quoted where, with Bolshevik determination and hard struggle, with the aid of the mass spirit of Socialist competition, the difficulties have been successfully overcome, on the lines laid down by Stalin. Stalin's "Six Points," when they are resolutely carried out, mean the strengthening of Socialism, not the retreat from it—for Socialism does not mean equal wages for everybody, nor does it mean that industry will be managed by committees, nor yet that engineers and technical experts will be treated as inferiors by the workmen.

The grand outcry about "the retreat from Communism," however, has come in recent months on account of the new Soviet decrees on agricultural policy.

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The entry of the majority of the peasantry—the overwhelming majority in the chief grain areas—into the collective farms in 1929-1932, and the simultaneous wiping out of the kulaks as a class, have opened an entirely new page in the history of the Revolution. The last refuge of capitalism in the land once ruled by the Tsars has been destroyed. Both in town and country, in industry and agriculture, a Socialist mode of production dominates. From this follow the most far-reaching consequences.

The XVII. Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union pointed out what they were, last February. The transformation of the Soviet Union " from a country of small and petty farming into a land with the largest scale farming in the world, based on collectivisation, extensive State farms and widespread application of modern machinery " solves the most essential and most difficult problem of the proletarian revolution. Why? Because the middle peasant—the predominant figure in the countryside—has now become, in his mass, the collective farmer. Instead of being the *ally* of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, he has become (together with the former poor peasant) himself a builder of Socialism, and therefore the *supporter*, the *bulwark* of the Soviet Government in the countryside. This means that both in town and in country the Soviet State has its reliable buttresses, constituting the overwhelming majority of the people—the proletariat in the towns, the collective farmers in the country. If " laying the foundations of Socialism " means anything, it means just what has been accomplished by the first Five Year Plan. Obviously the second Five Year Plan has the job of building the full edifice of Socialism on those foundations.

But the victory over the capitalist elements is yet far from complete. They have been routed, but they are not yet " mopped up," to recall the language of the trenches, and from strongly fortified " pill boxes " (even in many collective and Soviet farms, even in some State trusts and factories) their rearguards—the untouched kulaks in many areas, the dispossessed but still influential kulak and ex-bourgeois elements in others, and their unconscious agents, the right opportunists and " left " sectarians—are sniping strongly. The collective farms have yet to be completely consolidated. Mistakes and mismanagement still lead to temporary discredit of the collective farms in some areas, and even to their collapse, to say nothing of the consequent food difficulties for the State. The XVII. Party Conference stated: " The task of the organisational and economic consolidation of the collective farms and the Socialist re-education of the masses of collective farmers must still be a central point of attention in the period of the second Five Year Plan."

The recent decrees, of which so much has been made, deal precisely with the organisation and economic consolidation of the collective farms.

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On March 26 The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. condemned the compulsory socialisation of cattle individually owned by the collective farmers. It must be remembered that on the collective farms the land is State property, while labour, machinery, draught cattle and working buildings are collectivised. Anything the collective farm itself acquires or erects—milch cows, communal piggeries—is also, of course, collective property. But vegetable gardens, houses, milch cattle individually owned, farmyard animals and poultry are *not* socialised. "Only the enemies of the collective farms can allow the compulsory socialisation of cows and minor stock individually owned by the collective farmers," said the resolution. Why? Obviously because the collective farms have all their work cut out to master the management of the socialised property, and meanwhile careful housekeeping by the individual collective farmer increases the resources of the country. In many areas over-zealous Party organisations or collective farm managements lost sight of this, with very bad results. The line of the Party was laid down as the following: "Every collective farmer to have his own cow, small stock and poultry." Opposition entails expulsion from the Party.

On May 10 the C.C. adopted a resolution on strengthening the leadership of the collective farms, and condemned the arbitrary and irresponsible chopping and changing of chairmen and leading officials of collective farms, alteration of boundaries, amalgamation into "super-collectives," &c., by the district authorities which became widespread in the spring of 1932. The bearing of this on the consolidation of the collective farms is obvious. The principle was embodied and developed in a State decree on September 3, which points out that in the main grain areas of the country the collective farmers hold 80 to 90 per cent. of all State land: that thanks to this the old strip system and parcelling out of land have been wiped out, and mechanisation and improvements made possible; but that in many areas boundaries are still arbitrarily altered and land cut off for Soviet farms, or for individual farmers leaving the collective. The decree lays down: "That, while maintaining intact the property in the land of the Workers' and Peasants' State, every collective farm be confirmed in its holding of land at present worked by it, within its present boundaries, and all revisions be prohibited." The decree provides machinery for settling land disputes, arranging for future amalgamations, &c., and makes the important provision that "peasants leaving collective farms shall be allotted land from free State lands" only, *i.e.*, not at the expense of the collective farms.

Is this a "retreat from Communism?" Only in the imagination of those who don't—or won't—understand that the collective farms represent the decisive step forward of the mass of the peasantry on to the road to Socialism.

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So also with the measures for encouraging the trading activities of the collective farms and individual collective farmers, falsely represented as a new revival of the 1921 " new economic policy," therefore meaning the strengthening—among other elements—of private capitalism in the countryside.

Soviet trade is not one means of squeezing surplus-value out of the masses, like trade in capitalist countries. Side by side with assistance in production, it is one of the most powerful links between town and country, making available the resources of both for the fulfilment of the common plan of Socialist construction. Engels said of distribution in general : " Distribution is not the simple passive result of production and exchange : in its turn it exercises its own influence upon production and exchange." This is particularly true of Soviet economy. In the U.S.S.R. bad organisation of co-operative marketing or State purchases, supply of perfumery and silk stockings in bulk to village co-operatives instead of tools, spare parts and galvanised iron, such facts as that ascertained in 1931—that the furniture industry was working 90 per cent. on orders of institutions, and only 10 per cent. for the individual consumer—have an immediate reaction upon the supply of raw materials and even of labour power.

The XVII. Party Conference declared : " The development of commodity circulation is of prime importance. The development of the circulation of commodities, particularly in retail trade, and the use of business accounting in all economic activity, will best stimulate the mobilisation of the vast internal resources available in Soviet economy, which are still far from completely made use of. This will accelerate Socialist accumulation, and thereby strengthen the material basis of Socialist construction." The system of exclusively centralised supplies, and of principal reliance upon the " closed " co-operative store reflected the difficulties of the reconstruction period. But now, with the wiping out of the kulaks as a class in the main areas, the consolidation of the collective farms, the rapid increase in the output of industry (including industry supplying articles of mass consumption), a step forward is possible.

Is this a " retreat from Communism ? " Is this encouraging the growth of private capitalism ? Is this a new form of " N.E.P. ? " It will be seen at once that the exact contrary is the case. N.E.P. was a means of *reviving* commodity circulation, as a preliminary to the restoration of industry, at least, to the pre-war level : therefore it permitted of private accumulation by the kulaks amongst others. The 1932 measures are a means of *extending* commodity circulation, in order to keep pace with and in turn stimulate the complete reconstruction of all economic life, which has already long surpassed the pre-war level. The kulaks as a class are no more in the main agricultural areas, although individually they still display a desperate resistance. The trading now encouraged

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is primarily collective farm trading, *i.e.*, trading by peasantry organised on a Socialist basis, and only secondarily trading by collective farmers in their privately-owned produce. But it is the produce of the non-basic secondary means of production, which have not been socialised.

As a further illustration of the policy of the Communist Party—to consolidate and strengthen the 200,000 collective farms *as centres of Socialist construction*, through the " Socialist re-education of the masses of collective farmers "—may be mentioned the decree of July 5 on the harvest campaign. It makes elaborate provisions for simple piecework systems, to encourage the brigades or groups engaged on different jobs in the collective farms to harvest speedily, thresh economically, prevent losses, &c. ; it provides for income to be strictly distributed according to working days put in, and for advances up to 10-15 per cent. of grain threshed, even before State obligations have been met. It lays down that the best harvesters, sowers, threshers, &c., must be paid on a higher basic rate, in order to encourage efficiency. And the decree gives a practical sign of the interest which the Soviet State takes in the collective farmer moving on to higher, more efficient, more mechanised methods of production. It assigns 16,000 tractors, 6,700 motor cars, 170 million roubles' worth of harvesting machinery (including 8,500 " combine " thresher-reaper-binders), and 40 million roubles worth of spare parts, to be delivered to the Soviet and collective farms immediately.

Is this a " retreat from Communism ? " To ask such a foolish question is to answer it.

The stories of the failure of the Five Year Plan and the retreat from Communism in 1932 have even less justification than their predecessors, the story that " Thermidor " had arrived for the Russian Revolution in 1921, the story that it was on the way in 1927, and similar stories in several other years. The Five Year Plan is being victoriously completed, and the way prepared for the next still grander Five Year Plan—which will see the building of a classless Socialist society.

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I.L.P. 'REVOLUTIONARY POLICY'—DISCUSSION

[Last month we printed an article by an "Ex-I.L.P.'er" on "The Future of the I.L.P. What is a Revolutionary Policy?," and invited discussion from Left I.L.P.'ers on this theme.

We have received several contributions other than those below from Left I.L.P.'ers; but these show that there has evidently been a misunderstanding as to the subject of discussion. These contributions dealt with the question of the Communist Party (not Communism as a programme, but the Communist Party as an organisation), and the criticisms felt by the writers in relation to the Communist Party. Such a question may also have interest and value to discuss on a suitable occasion, but it only cuts across the present issue of discussion, viz.: WHAT IS "REVOLUTIONARY POLICY" AS UNDERSTOOD BY LEFT I.L.P.'ERS?

This question needs to be discussed first in terms of principles and programme. Only on the basis of a clearing of these issues can subsequent conclusions be correctly drawn as to the specific questions of party organisation and party affiliations.

We shall therefore still be glad to keep open our pages to Left I.L.P.'ers (supporters of the "Revolutionary Policy Committee" or others) for the purpose of discussion as to what is meant by "Revolutionary Policy."—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

I.—The Position of the I.L.P.

By JOSEPH SOUTHALL

THE Birmingham Federation of the I.L.P. has advocated disaffiliation from the Labour Party for two or three years, having seen the true character of that party earlier than other federations, and understanding that a Socialist body that was affiliated to an anti-Socialist organisation was contradicting itself.

My own personal experience of the Conferences of the Labour Party goes back some six years when I was sent by my own divisional Labour Party as a delegate. There I saw for myself how the rule of the official clique was maintained and fortified by the monstrous institution of the block vote, a machine more anti-Socialist and anti-Democratic than any other political device that I know of in this country. I saw that four or five trade union bosses handling hundreds of thousands of votes, with little or no reference to the opinions of the rank-and-file, could do what they liked with the Conference and crush any opposition that might arise. It was and is government of the officials, by the officials and for the officials, and far from being the champion of the working class, the Labour Party has become its most subtle and dangerous enemy.

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The pitiful struggles of the I.L.P. delegation were treated with impatient contempt by the serried ranks of trade union officials for whose personal advantage and advancement the whole institution seemed to exist. Its hatred of the Communists was positively hysterical and its injustice to them was, I have no doubt, dictated by the knowledge that such an element in their midst would bar the way to office, a goal which they would do almost anything to attain. To us in Birmingham the conduct of the second Labour Government caused no surprise; we had accurately gauged the character of the Labour leaders, and unlike some of our I.L.P. fellows, we were not disappointed.

And now, partly by our propaganda and still more by the pressure of circumstances the I.L.P. has thrown off the yoke and is free—free to pursue its own policy in accordance with its own principles and convictions. These principles are not so definitely formulated as are those of the Communist Party and moreover the changed situation necessitates some discussion to clarify the position, and in these circumstances no doubt vague expressions have been used which have opened the way to criticism from outside as well as among ourselves. But while we hold ourselves free to criticise the prominent members of the Party, one thing ought to be said, viz., that our present leaders cannot be accused of accepting the bribe of office or fat jobs which I feel sure they could have had. They have not feathered their own nests and sought their own personal advancement and even if they have made mistakes they are still entitled to our respect and our confidence in their integrity.

The change from Capitalism to Socialism (or Communism) is so fundamental that it is justly described as revolutionary, but we feel, or some of us feel, that this does not, as the Communists think, necessitate civil war.

Not that we believe the change can come through Parliament or that we ever had any faith in the bogus League of Nations. For myself I can say that I am a pacifist, but not of the cruiser-building, bomb-dropping type that has so badly discredited pacifism. I regard the killing of our fellow men with horror even though some of them may seem bad enough to deserve it, but this is a matter of feeling and not of argument. To Communists and many Socialists it seems to be an axiom that Capitalism cannot be destroyed without armed revolution but this axiom must be challenged and, I submit, is unsound. Indeed, I would go further and say that this idea of establishing justice by violence is a capitalist idea and that it is old-fashioned and out of date. There have been many bloody revolutions but nowhere except in Russia is the reign of Socialism set up; and even in Russia I think the leaflet was at least as effective as the bullet. Moreover one is bound to remember that the vast extent of Russia and its terrible climate defeated even Napoleon, and that Russia can grow its own food.

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What *can* be done has been shown by the sailors at Invergordon—they fired no shot, wounded no one, but won. And they won because there are no Labour leaders in the Navy. This brings us to the first necessity of the workers, to shake off their present leaders or misleaders, and set up a new organisation which can say to Capitalism we will no longer co-operate with you and under you. That is to say that until the workers can set their own house in order they cannot govern the country, and this I take it is the true meaning of Middleton Murry's saying that the Revolution must be in our hearts and minds. Thus, it will be seen that disaffiliation from, and direct opposition to, the official Labour Party was not a merely negative step for the I.L.P., but a strong move towards the awakening of the workers and their extrication from the net in which they have become entangled.

How far it may be possible for the I.L.P. to work harmoniously with the Communist Party remains to be seen; but such harmony and co-operation demand respect for principles held by others than ourselves. Recognising the great qualities of Communist comrades I have endeavoured to exercise such forbearance myself—is it too much to hope it may be shown on both sides?

II.—Converging Tracks?

By W. GRAHAM

IN my opinion, a much stronger case than that put by "Ex-I.L.P.'er" could have been presented on behalf of those of the rank-and-file of the I.L.P. who have broken away from the Labour Party.

In his statement, "Ex-I.L.P.'er" repeatedly misuses the terms "gradualism," "evolutionary" and "revolutionary." To suggest that I.L.P. leaders have been misguided in their "gradualist" policy is to credit them with something to which they have no title. The plain, blunt fact is that the I.L.P. and the Labour Party would not have reached Socialism in ten thousand years. They are to be blamed, not for their gradualism, but for their feather-brains and deceitfulness.

Even Communism is gradualist, for the simple reason that Revolution is a rupture in the course of evolution; so that when "Ex-I.L.P.'er" states that the I.L.P. and the Labour Party are evolutionary, whereas the Communist Party is revolutionary, he is simply misusing words and confusing the issue. Who has not been intensely interested in reading the history (or the evolution) of the Russian revolutions?

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No ; the fault does not lie in gradualism ; and for this reason it seems to me that a much stronger case could be stated in expression of the outlook of a large proportion of disaffiliated I.L.P.'ers.

Thus, believing in parliamentary procedure, I.L.P. members would conduct propaganda as an organisation separate from the Labour Party. The I.L.P. would gain (or fail to gain!) its own parliamentary representatives, who would be subject to severe control by the rank-and-file. These representatives would make a bold stand in parliament, and would probably be ejected. The workers would see the genuine honesty of these representatives, and further propaganda would become increasingly successful. The aim being Socialism, the tactics would be adapted to changing circumstances, and it might even be necessary to adopt final revolutionary methods (final rupture).

The only difference between the I.L.P. and the C.P. would be that the latter is convinced that Revolution (rupture) is necessary, whereas the former does not know yet if revolution is necessary or not, and therefore does not make revolution its immediate aim.

But if both the I.L.P.'ers and the Communists are quite sincere and courageous enough to proceed along their own lines, they are bound to converge at no very distant point and become one anti-capitalist army.

I leave the case shadowed in this way, believing that it expresses what is in the mind of a large proportion of I.L.P.'ers, and that, therefore, its criticism by our Communist iconoclasts will be the more helpful to the I.L.P.'ers.

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THE STRIKE OF THE BELGIAN MINERS

By WILLIAM ZAK

> . . . . Despite what they say, the Socialist leaders are helpless and see very well how the ground is slipping from under them. And that, too, is so much the worse for us, for to-day they are the brake which protects us. (*L'Independence Belge*, July 28, 1932.)

IN this one sentence *L'Independence Belge*, the paper of the Liberal Banker Francqui—the paper of high finance and heavy industry, summed up the turn taken by the great Belgian strike, at a time when the workers had defeated the attempts of the Social Democrat and Reformist leaders to break the strike.

To recount the history of this strike and to estimate its importance it is necessary to go back a little and find the causes of this great outburst of the Belgian workers, an outburst which has definitely developed into a counter-offensive struggle.

Economic and Social Conditions in Belgium

At all times the working conditions in Belgium have been scandalous and wages one of the lowest in Europe. Sixty years ago, dealing with wages and working conditions in Belgium, Karl Marx, who had spent a number of years in the country, declared that " *Belgium was the paradise of capitalism* " ; necessarily it was hell for the workers. The situation has not changed, though during the post-war period of " prosperity " some slight improvement in conditions were obtained by the workers.

But, with the fall and collapse of the franc, despite the fact the industry was still comparatively " prosperous " owing to the export bonus, the rise in food prices immediately lowered the standard of life of the workers. The sliding scale of wage agreements, which are so readily used by the employers and the reformists to justify wage-cuts to-day, was " *very difficult to operate owing to changing and uncertain circumstances.*" The stabilisation of the franc on a gold basis still further accentuated the fall of the purchasing power of the workers. With the development of the world economic crisis and the sharpening of the crisis in Belgium, as an industrial exporting country, since 1930 attacks on wages have been repeatedly carried through by the employers with the aid of the reformist leaders. Unemployment and part time working has become widespread.

The Wage Offensive

In Belgium the employers started their attacks on wages with an attack on the miners. While the official drop in the retail price index

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was 10 per cent. from July 1st, 1930 to April, 1931, no less than four official wage cuts on the basis of the miners' wage agreement sliding scale (reductions called by the reformists *reduction conventionelle*) took place. From April, 1931, to June 19th, 1932, several more " conventionelle " reductions were operated. Alongside the " conventionelle " reductions further attacks were carried through in certain coalfields. By attacks in individual pits or groups of pits, by the cutting down of piece rates, by rationalisation and speeding up (the average output per miner during the past six months was increased from 4,528 kilos to 4,714) the lowering of miners' wages was still further accentuated, bringing the total reductions in wages up to anything between 40 and 50 per cent.

At the same time sliding scale wage reductions were carried through for metal workers, railworkers, textile workers, quarry workers, &c., and fresh reductions were pending in July and August for workers in many industries.

For months past the resistance of the workers, especially the miners, against the continual wage reductions had been growing and already before April, 1931, it was only by cunning manœuvres and Left phrases that the reformist leaders had been able to stem the growing tide of revolt. While the first reductions were carried through by the reformists, with the " object of patriotic unity," the arguments now changed to the need of maintaining the " protective wage agreements." Every possible argument was used by Delattre (Secretary of the Belgian Miners' Union, Secretary of the Amsterdam Miners' International and Socialist Deputy), Dujarden, and the lesser reformist leaders to get cuts across. In a series of articles Delattre " showed " how the Belgian coal industry was menaced by British and German dumping, of course not mentioning that Belgian coal exports had increased by 70 per cent. (most likely, as International Miners' Secretary, he wrote this in the name of international solidarity). Then there was the question of stocks, the fact that the miners if they struck would " imperil sick benefits and free coal." Dujarden declared :

> What do you expect, comrades. Nothing can be done ! The coal situation is extremely bad. You'd lose the fight. Don't let yourselves be enticed into the adventures the Communists want to involve you in.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the year, the Government introduced a Bill into the Belgian Parliament on the " revalorisation of wheat " which according to their own estimates would result in an increase of the price of bread of 10 centimes per loaf. Preparations were also made to attack old-age pensions and the allocations to unemployed workers, both insured and non-insured.

In the face of the preparation of these all-round attacks, and in face of the lead given by the Government to the employers by reducing

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the wages of civil-servants, the temper of the workers became extremely high, and it was just at this period that the reformist miners' leaders signed away another 5 per cent. of the miners' wages, the reduction to operate from June 19th, 1932.

For months the very small but extremely active Red Miners' Union (Centrale Révolutionnaires des Mineurs) and the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (Opposition Syndical Révolutionnaire) supported by the Communist Party had been carrying on an intensified campaign amongst the miners and other workers to mobilise resistance to these attacks on the basis of a broad united front struggle.

* * *

The Story of the Strike

On Monday, June 20, in the small mining town of Wasmes, Borinage (a region immediately to the South-West of Mons), following a meeting held by the Red Miners' Union (R.M.U.) and the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (R.T.U.O.) the miners decided to strike on the next day against the cuts and immediately took steps to extend the struggle.

On Tuesday, June 21, the eight pits of Wasmes are deserted and already the strikers have been able to stop certain pits in Cuesmes, Frameries, and Quanegnon. All day Tuesday the strikers under the leadership of the R.M.U. and the R.T.U.O. carry on their work of getting other pits out, marches are organised on to the neighbouring pits and by the following Monday fifteen thousand miners are out in the Borinage.

By this time the lead of the Red Union and Opposition is being followed in Charleroi and the Centre (which are the adjacent coalfields to that of the Borinage); strikes are breaking out and it is with great efforts that the reformist leaders in these areas are in some cases able to get the workers to restart work only to see them come out the next day. The Red Union and Revolutionary Opposition redouble their efforts, new placards are posted up each night calling for action, and the strike begins to spread to the Liège coalfields.

By July 7 the miners strike is general in the Borinage, 30,000 miners are out as well as 15,000 in the Centre and Charleroi. Moreover, the strike spreads to other industries, and in the first place to the metal workers who find themselves threatened with a pending wage cut of 5 per cent. The Government, alarmed at the situation, begins to mobilise and draft large forces of police and gendarmes into the strike area. The reformist leaders who up to this time have opposed the strike, unable to hold the workers back and seeing all their manœuvres to stop strike action have failed, change their front and declare themselves in favour of the strike in an attempt to capture the leadership and, as will be seen, to betray the strike.

But in most of the pits, villages and towns, on the initiative of the R.M.U. and R.T.U.O., strike committees have been set up embracing organised and unorganised, reformist and revolutionary, Belgian and foreign workers, and despite the undoubted influence the reformists still have they find it impossible to capture the leadership.

The strike continues to spread, the bourgeois and reformist papers are full of tales about "gold from Moscow," battalions of Cossacks are arriving,

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and a state of martial law is operating. Attempts are made by the gendarmerie to stop the "*débauchage*" (strike picketting) which the strikers are carrying on; to ban the revolutionary meetings and stop marches and demonstrations. Clashes occur with the police and the gendarmes, shots are fired on the strikers, barricades are erected; the miners and their wives, under the shades of red flags, to the strains of the "International," fight back.

At Roux, where in 1886 striking miners were shot down by the troops, two workers are killed; in many places dozens are wounded, hundreds are arrested.

By July 14, under the pressure of the rank and file, the Trades Council of Charleroi is obliged to issue a call for a general strike, to which the workers immediately respond one hundred per cent.

The central slogans which have been raised by the workers:—"No Wage reductions!" "For a forty-hour working week!" "No reduction in unemployment benefit!" "No tax on bread!" are supplemented in each factory, in each district, in each industry, by specific sectional and local demands.

The Government has begun to draft troops and armoured cars into the districts, and in an effort still further to provoke the workers it sends into these Walloon, *i.e.*, French speaking, districts, Flemish regiments. But this is of no avail. The workers greet the soldiers with the cry of "Don't shoot, we are your brothers!" an appeal to which many of the soldiers respond.

At the same time as the Government send troops, the reformist leaders pour into the strike area to attempt to stop any extension and regain control of the movement. But the Vanderveldes, the Van Wallegems, the Delattres, who come to exhort the workers to "calm and discipline" are received by the workers in the manner they deserve. The *Peuple*, the Central organ of Social Democracy in its issue of July 12 takes up the slogan of the semi-official paper of the Government, *Le Soir*—"The crisis is the enemy! It will not be defeated by the throwing of stones or the shooting of rifles!" which it reproduces in its headline. Meanwhile on the same day Delattre raised the question in Parliament, and the General Council of the Belgian Labour Party (Parti Ouvrier Belge) and General Council of the Belgian Trade Union Congress (Commission Syndicale) hold a joint meeting in Brussels to consider the situation.

The *Peuple* (July 13) publishes the resolution of the General Council of the Parti Ouvrier Belge (Belgian Labour Party) and the Commission Syndicale, in which they declare themselves: "With the strikers against the Government. With the strikers against the Comité Central Industriel (Employers' Federation). With the strikers against bank capital. With the strikers against the rioters." (?)

At the same time they come out with the slogan, "Forward, with method and discipline, for undaunted struggle for our bread, our work and our dignity." In this slogan, which sounds so well, "method and discipline" are synonymous with no extension of the strike, which is the only method to obtain complete victory. Instead the reformist leaders call on the workers to wait for the calling of a special national Congress to decide on whether a national general strike should be called or not.

Meantime the strike continues to spread. In the Limbourg coalfields, on the border of Holland—which is isolated from other coalfields—revolutionary forces have been concentrated and the miners abandoned the pits. At the same time the strike also spread to metal factories in Flanders and Brabant. Martial law is declared in Hainaut and Flanders and clashes between the

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police and gendarmes and the workers occur continually. Despite the efforts of the reformists, at this stage the " safety men " also decide to abandon the pits.

The Reformists' Betrayal

In this situation on July 13, in Parliament the reformists implore the Government to agree to their resolution on the situation and so enable them to end the strike. A Liberal resolution, which takes up the Social Democrat policy, is adopted with one vote against (Communist Deputy) and twenty-two abstentions. It declares that there will be :—

(1) No tax on bread.
(2) No more wage reductions.
(3) No reduction in unemployment allocations.
(4) Organised sharing of work (the Stagger System advocated by Social Democracy).

At the Commission Mixte des Mines the employers agreed to the stabilisation of wages until November 1, but the 5 per cent. cut of June 19 is to operate. The reformists acclaimed this as a complete victory of the workers, declaring that all their demands have been accepted. In Brussels on the same day a demonstration of strikers and unemployed, which was banned, clashes with the police, shots are fired, a fight ensues, but the workers hold the streets.

The following day the Commission Mixte de la Metallurgie meets and decides not to operate the pending cuts and stabilised wages until November 1. Similar decisions are also taken in other industries. The General Councils of the P.O.B. and C.S. meet jointly on Saturday, June 16, and decided that the workers have obtained satisfaction and order them back to work on Monday. The conclusion of the resolution adopted by them declares :—

FROM MONDAY MORNING, JULY 18.

In the mines, the factories, the offices, and the shops, calm, collected and unanimous.

But if in their blindness our adversaries *do not grasp the profound significance of the dramatic events which have taken place, the workers with the same impressive unanimity and without weakness will impress upon them the respect of the sacred promises that have been made to them :*

Fidelity to your old organisations !
Indestructible faith in our ideal !
We will win by order, unity and discipline !

In this way the reformists try with left phrases to cajole the workers back to work. On Sunday a special reformist Miners' Congress is held to decide whether the terms will be accepted. The miners' delegation from the Centre raises the question of a " vitally necessary minimum wage," the reformist leaders refuse to allow any discussion on the resolution and the delegation of the Centre leaves the Congress in protest, but nevertheless a strong minority votes against the terms.

The workers, and especially the miners, are not so easily convinced. It is not simply statements by the reformist leaders " that the workers have all they came out for " that can convince them. Vandervelde's article in the *Peuple* of the 17th imploring the workers to return to work the following day is not enough. The miners remember that they came out against the 5 per cent. cut which operated on June 19, and which the reformist leaders had *ordered* them to accept. They also remember that one of their central demands is the 40-*hour*

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week. No matter what the reformist leaders may say, they know that stabilisation until November 1 implies the operation of the June 19 cut; that the Stagger system is not the reduction of the working week, but means further reductions in wages, the placing of the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the workers, and this they are not prepared to accept as the events of the following weeks will show.

On Monday, 18th, the reformist leaders are able to get the metal workers, &c., to resume work, but local and district meetings of miners are called and the majority decide to continue the strike for :—

No reduction in wages.

For a forty-hour week.

No reduction in unemployment allocations.

No tax on bread.

Restoration of the June 19th 5 per cent. cut in miners' wages.

But for the reformists the strike is over and so confident are they that they have broken the heroic struggle of the Belgian workers that on July 20 the *Movement Syndical Belge*, the organ of the Commission Syndical, appears with a leading article headed " After the Strike," in which they declare

> . . . We have the absolute conviction that the concessions obtained constitute the *maxima* of what it was permissible to expect under such circumstances.

(*To be continued*).

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THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE IN THE PERIOD OF CAPITALIST DECLINE

By GORE GRAHAM

THIRTY or forty years ago the best sellers among scientific books were such works as Haeckel's *The Riddle of the Universe.* With confidence, pride and naïveté, they expounded the great advances of the natural sciences. They were frankly materialist, insofar as each scientist pursued his particular branch of work; and in their unwitting *obiter dicta* let fall iconoclastic observations and conclusions that brought the fusty theologians angrily to their feet. These books, it is true, were attacked by the darkest reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie. Haeckel himself had his window broken by a stone hurled from some true God-fearing German. In England, bishops and frockless theologians like Sir Oliver Lodge, devoted the best part of their energies to defending God against these attacks. But they fought against the stream. Despite this opposition, the books of this natura-materialist and others of the same kind, sold in all countries by the scores of thousands. Why? Because the materialism in question was bound up with the advance of science and the advance of science with the development of capitalism and the growth of Empire.

The tremendous development of science during the nineteenth century, itself impelled forward by capitalist development, in turn assisted and determined the development of capitalism. The rise of modern industry, the expansion of power overseas, Britain's monopoly on the world market, the newly-realised conceptions of empire, all produced among the ruling classes a general feeling of confidence, a general belief in the fitness of things, an ability to look around and into the future without any doubt or fear as to the correctness of their actions. When they were aware of certain disagreeable factors any disquiet was momentary and was swamped by the prevailing belief in the inevitability of perfection. To them, all was evolution on the ascending curve; the inherent illogicality of their class position blinded them to the fact that sooner or later a curve turns down the other way.

And if that which gave them such wealth and power, such command over nature, also disturbed the older conceptions of the universe then on the whole it was decided that the older conceptions were wrong. Didn't facts disprove them? Weren't they able, since it suited them, to apply

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the test of action? After all, anyone can face up to the facts when the facts are favourable. The victorious bourgeoisie certainly did.

Not, of course, that science was enthroned on high and theology swept completely off the board. Only Socialism, only workers in power, as in Russia to-day, can do that. Religious ideas and organisation were clearly recognised to be the effective instruments of class rule that they are. Had not their immediate forefathers at a time when one person in every seven was a pauper consciously met the situation by devoting millions to the erection of more churches? Had they not been in the habit of sacking workmen for failing to go to church on Sunday?

Therefore there was no suggestion that the power of religion over the masses should be deliberately reduced. Even Huxley, the man who coined the word agnosticism to describe the old sceptical half-way house of men unable usually by class restriction to face up to any logical following out of their thinking, even Huxley declared, when sitting on the London School Board, that the masses must still be taught the scriptures and to give allegiance to God. And he did so, without any scruple, at the same time as he was engaged in energetic controversy with frumpled antimacassars on the question of the existence of God.

For a long time the air was filled with the controversies arising from the conflict of scientific knowledge and the theological paraphernalia inherited from the past and inseparable from pre-proletarian class rule. Prominent figures like Huxley and Gladstone fought loud and long over such questions as the Gadarene swine.

In what way then, did the bourgeoisie finally declare itself and find a "solution" of this? By an artificial fusion of the science that gave power to its right arm and the religious material that gave strength to its left. Bourgeois science, feeling the need to do so in its bones, accepted religion; and religion accepted science. As early as 1895 Canon Bonney, speaking at the Church Congress at Norwich, expressed the Church's willingness to accept the achievements of science and a readiness to revise the doctrines of the Church in accord with scientific advancement. That the scientists permitted the results of their work to remain nothing more than "reformist" biblical criticism was merely a measure of the class unity of these shamefaced materialists with their brothers in black.

On its side religion in great part shed its crude anthropomorphism and in its place appeared a "creative intelligence" of Sir Oliver Lodge, the *élan vital* of Bergson, the mathematician's mind of Sir James Jeans, or the equally quasi-Hegelian "mind stuff" of Professor Eddington. It was merely the words that were changed. How "science" began to live harmoniously with religion is well shown in this statement of the Bishop of Birmingham:

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> " . . . The progressive development of thought emphasises the unity of plan and structure of the universe. The Cosmos hangs together. The bundles of regular sequences in it which we have discovered indicate the existence of true cause, of purpose expressed in a single ground plan. It seems to me that the existence of some sort of God to whose Intelligent Will the Whole is due has become an increasingly *reasonable* belief." (My italics : G.G.)

Because organised religion said good-bye to the crudities of the Lightfoot[1] variety and took science into its fold it remained almost as powerful a class weapon as in the days before scientific advancement. Is it any wonder then that a prominent rationalist like McCabe, writing in the *Rationalist Press Association Annual* for 1925, should complain mournfully that the whole of their several decades of work and propaganda had been rendered null and void because that which they had " fought " (theology) had taken the weapons out of their hands ? (And inevitably so ; for their " rationalist " opposition was as metaphysical as the philosophical idealism it opposes. " The criticism of theology becomes the criticism of politics," as Marx said nearly a hundred years ago.)

* * * * *

And now of to-day. To-day the best sellers among scientific books are no longer the blithe expositions of scientific wonder of a Haeckel. Times have altered. To-day there is hardly a soul living who believes that capitalism is on the ascent. The British monopoly of the world market is now a far-off memory ; the hungry rivals in the imperialist world have come to stay and face each other like wild tigers ; 1914-18 has been and gone ; a workers' Republic exists on one-sixth of the earth's surface ; the British Empire is in disintegration and the colonies in daily revolt ; the economic crisis deepens day by day ; in the capitalist world are forty millions unemployed, poverty unheard of, huge sections of plant idle for years, machinery being broken up and at the same time a super-abundance of commodities rotting or being destroyed ; vigour, life and inventive progressive power being displayed only in the manufacture of instruments of death by the Powers preparing for unprecedentedly destructive wars—yes, an entirely different picture. In the midst of such surroundings the ruling class hears the rumble of its doom. Like other declining imperialist classes it flies to religion not merely for the utilitarian purpose of class rule, but also for its own comfort. As in its despair it has begun to smash machines as a solution to the economic crisis so it has begun theoretically to turn on, and to attack, science.

With the development of capitalism to the period of its decline the former attack of science on religion has been transformed into a serious

[1]Dr. John Lightfoot, an eminent Hebrew scholar in his day and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, maintained that Man was created by the Trinity on October 25th 4004 years B.C. at 9 o'clock in the morning.

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all-fronted attack of religion on science. The leading professional theologians are to-day scientists like Archbishop Temple, Bishop Headlam, Dean Inge—who all base themselves on "science." To-day, if a scientist expresses in public anything approaching materialism he is at once subjected to a virulent persecution by the capitalist press. An example of this was given in 1927 when Sir Arthur Keith spoke at the British Association on Early Man without including God in the picture.

Another example of the same phenomenon was provided a few weeks ago. A group of people, with a great deal of noise have been to the Brocken in Germany to put the Black Magic to the test. They set out with all the paraphernalia necessary for enacting with fidelity the diabolical magic of the 15th century; a maiden pure in heart, a virgin he-goat and a noisome ointment. The ointment took some compounding for among its ingredients was the blood of bats caught before midnight. According to the book, after certain incantations and anointings, the virgin he-goat should have turned into a *faire* youth of surpassing beauty. But it didn't. The Black Magic was not going to be drawn like that. The whole expensive and carefully-staged experiment failed. And then—and here is the point—the capitalist press the day after the event lamented that nothing else could be expected since the experimenters entered upon their undertaking with scepticism. This is what the *Evening Standard* (London) wrote in its leading article (June 18, 1932):

> Nothing has been disproved, nothing proved, except that the formula does not work automatically. But the interest of our time in these things is a phenomenon which deserves examination. It is sometimes interpreted as a harbinger of a new age of superstition, and yet it can be regarded equally well as the manifestation of a more advanced scepticism. Science bade us be sceptical of tales about ghosts, vampires, werwolves and the like. Now we are beginning to be sceptical of what science bids us.

And so the bourgeoisie reveals itself. Attacking science it opens its doors to Black Magic, just as in its violent distracted attempts to suppress the world revolutionary movement it also goes back into the Middle Ages for methods and instruments of repression (Fascism with its medieval torturing of class-war prisoners, the new importance of the Roman Catholic Church, &c.). When that is the prevailing state of mind it is not surprising to hear Bishops calling for a ten years' holiday in scientific work—which was actually the Bishop of Ripon's appeal to the meeting of the British Association in 1927.

Hence the best sellers to-day among "scientific" books are books like Jeans' *Mysterious Universe*, Eddington's *Nature of the Physical World*, and Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*. All these scientists are specialists in their particular sphere, but in their rôle of popular writers they are reactionary theologians. They play a great part

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in stifling the consciousness of the people who read them. They use their weight as scientists to bend the knees of their readers before God.

Marxists are well aware that a scientist, however distinguished in his particular sphere of work, can talk the most puerile rubbish on other subjects, particularly sociology (as, indeed, can the bourgeois sociologists, since sociology is only a science when it is Marxist). In Merrie England the village barber was also the doctor. He would put down his scissors and take up his knife and leech. In declining imperialist Britain the scientist is also the theologian.

The works of Jeans and Eddington are, as we have said, the rankest collection of idealist theology one could wish to meet with. Primitive tribes made their Gods an ideal hunter, a great fisherman and the like. Eddington differs from these for he makes God a perfect mathematician !

What stands out in the philosophical writing of these two—at least to anyone who has made a study of philosophy—is their ignorance of the philosophical achievements of the past. Consequently their philosophy is of such a hodge-podge character ; here it is pure Berkeleyanism, there it is Kantian and in the next place quasi-Hegelian. With typical British disregard for the theoretical achievements of the past, not merely abroad but also in England, they put forward points of view which were expressed over a hundred years ago by Kant in a masterful fashion and later demolished in equally masterly style by Hegel ; or near-Hegelian arguments which were afterwards finally absorbed and superseded by Marxism. But of all this they are completely unaware. They proceed undisturbed in their work of using distorted interpretations of recent scientific discoveries as the text for their idealist sermon.

Together with Russell, Whitehead and Co., their efforts are directed towards proving that the world of our common experience is not the real world, and that in one way or another science and the reality we know is an illusion, that all our experience and affairs are but the insubstantial phenomena of a mystical reality. Whereas the earlier crude theology taught the masses that bad as things are in this life there is a good time coming after death, the new theology of the scientists teaches us one better, namely, that bad as things are they only *seem*, they are not even real.

" The ethers and their waves are the most real thing of which we have any knowledge or experience, and are as real as anything can possibly be for us," says Jeans.[2] " We feel it necessary to concede some background to the measures which physics studies—an external world ; but the attributes of this world, except in so far as they are represented in the measures are outside scientific scrutiny," says Eddington.[3] " The

[2] *The Mysterious Universe*, p. 80.
[3] Eddington, *Nature of the Physical World*, p. xiii.

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poets are entirely mistaken. They should address their lyrics to themselves, and should turn them into odes of self-congratulation on the excellency of the human mind. Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless," says Whitehead.[4] "We have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature," says Eddington.[5] "Mind is the first and most direct thing in our experience; all else is remote inference," says Eddington.[6] "The universe begins to look more and more like a great thought than a machine," says Jeans.[7] "The idea of a universal Mind or Logos would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory," says Eddington.[8] "Consciousness I regard as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything we talk about; everything we regard as existing postulates consciousness," says the scientist Planck.[9]

And so on *ad nauseam* this mosaic of theological scraps (weak echoes of Berkeley, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, &c.) continues; *practically* the result of the causes we have mentioned, the fitting reflex of imperialist decadence, and *theoretically* a poverty-stricken and unconscious mixture of past and long-since superseded philosophical doctrines. Hegel said that every philosophy contains all that has gone before it, plus its own additions (although he contradicted himself when he set out to present a final system). Of Hegelianism this could certainly be said. And it, in turn, was absorbed in and superseded by Marxism. Since then Marxism has been and is alone the bearer and the leader of the process of philosophical development. And thus all that purports to be philosophy among the bourgeoisie such as this stuff of Jeans, Eddington, Whitehead, &c., &c., is, theoretically, a dead, meagre, re-hash (conscious or unconscious) of that which lived for its time in one or other of the great contributors to philosophic thought in the past.

Their whole mutual feebleness is shown in a book by C. E. M. Joad (*Philosophical Aspects of Modern Science*), which claims to be a criticism of the religious, mystical tendencies of modern scientists. In this book we have the inevitable, useless and tedious reshuffling of words lasting for 300 pages. How enormously tiresome indeed are the prosodic exercises of these "philosophers" who, by changing the words of the writings of their fellow-peddlers, imagine they are advancing the quest for truth. Mr. Joad is really the last person in the world able to refute the theology of Jeans, Eddington and Co. His attempt or, rather, pretence at doing so produces the same kind of matter that would result

[4] *Science and the Modern World*, p. 69.
[5] *Nature of the Physical World*, p 330.
[6] *Science and the Unseen World*, p. 24.
[7] *Mysterious Universe*, p. 148.
[8] *Nature of the Physical World*, p. 338.
[9] Interview in *Observer* (25th January, 1931).

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from a critique by Sir Oliver Lodge of Bergson's *élan vital* and the putting in its place of his own " creative intelligence " ; or *vice versa.* It would be folly to look for the ability to refute the theology of the scientists in any section of the bourgeoisie. When the " radicals " fail, how much more does a person like Joad fail, this Daniel come to judgment, who writes on page 306 that " the mystic to whose position in the hierarchy of knowing I now turn, is, I conceive, one in whom life has emerged at the highest level which it has yet reached " ?

How could any serious beginning of a refutation be expected from one who writes :

> What may be the position of the churches in the United States I do not know. In England, however, it is bad, and grows manifestly serious, in respect to Church and Sunday School attendance, religious belief and religious enthusiasm.

This, in a mystical-religious magazine, *The Sufi Quarterly*, is the beginning of an article entitled " Mysticism—the Religion of the Future, by C. E. M. Joad, the Well-known Philosopher " !

On some other occasion space may be found to deal with the mass of epistemological confusion contained in this volume. The far less frivolous writings of Mr. Joad, whom the Poison Press describes, by the way, as the " Great Philosopher," are articles like the one appearing in the *Sunday Chronicle* of May 8, in which he says :

> Looking back upon myself as a youth, I see a young man, witty, argumentative, provocative, exasperatingly rational, and professionally jealous for the public good. My public zeal expressed itself in an enthusiasm for advanced creeds and causes of all kinds. I was not only a Socialist, I was a humanitarian, a suffragist, a pacifist, even a vegetarian.
>
> It is interesting, perhaps a little saddening, to realise in middle age (40) that while my capacity for sympathy has widened, so that I can now feel imaginatively the ills of mankind and feel them intensely, my zeal for their alleviation has correspondingly diminished.
>
> As a young man I took little account of food. *The attitude of indifference has changed. To-day I regard food and drink as two of the major interests of life and my meals are among the most important events of the day.* Now at the age of 40 I have a pretty taste in food and quite a respectable one in clarets.

Comment is not merely superfluous, it is almost impossible. Can a lower and more pathetic type of creature be found than this decadent " philosopher."

Another illuminating book recently published is *The Religion of Scientists* by a reverend gentleman named Drawbridge. This gentleman sets out to " discover " if the scientific and religious points of view were compatible ; are men of science opposed to the religious outlook on life ; do they consider that natural science discredits the theistic view of

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Ultimate Reality? In order to make the discovery a questionnaire was sent to 200 members of the Royal Society. "Much of the conflict between religion and Natural science in the past," says the introduction, "was due to misunderstanding on both sides. The controversy about 'The Bible or Darwin' has ended, except perhaps, in Tennessee. . . . Theology is more fluid to-day than it has been for centuries and few theologians refuse to discard views with regard to the material universe, which the best natural science of our day condemns as out of date."

On the other hand, the replies to the questionnaire revealed that science was also "more fluid," that though bourgeois theology may have accommodated itself to science, bourgeois science has certainly accommodated itself to theology. The above-quoted remarks were endorsed by the reply from Professor Seward, who said that "In recent years my views have been modified in the direction of more definite belief in the existence of a spiritual world and what it implies." And by a professor of physiology, who said that:

> Twenty-five to fifty years ago physical scientists tended to be materialists and the biologists followed them. At present they tend to be mystics, while many biologists—particularly in America—tend to lag behind them, to retain a materialist outlook. There is a strong feeling though, growing among biologists. . . .

This change which is admitted all round is also ascribed by all of them to be the result of the "recent remarkable developments" of science. That they should see this as the cause is merely an expression of their unscientific incapacity to see the social, class and historical roots of their views and feelings, to see that the latter are the products of the former. They are thus able to kid themselves that the theological activities of present-day bourgeois science are caused merely by the pure developments of scientific knowledge. What is more natural than that a declining class should declare, in the words of Eddington:

> Our environment may and should mean something towards us which is not to be measured with the tools of the physicist or described by the metric symbols of the mathematician.

Faced with huge armies of unemployed, &c., which cast the shadows of dusk over their class rule, it is natural that they should wish to believe that these things mean something more than the disturbing results of measurement with the symbols of the statistician!

In answer to the first question: Do you believe in the existence of a spiritual domain? God came in at ten to one, for there were 121 definitely affirmative and only thirteen replies to answer no. One biologist said, "I am a scientist who is interested in understanding my experience through the approach of science. But there are other aspects of my experience much more understandable to me by my faith in God and Jesus." A Professor of Physics wrote: "I think that the modern

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physicist is far less inclined to be dogmatic than his materialist predecessors"; while Prof. Sollas wrote: "I think that a strong reaction against materialism commenced long before the 'recent remarkable developments' which have come unexpectedly, as a surprise."

In regard to the next question, Is Man responsible for his acts?, it is pertinent to have a peep at these "recent remarkable developments" that are so much spoken about. "To-day," says Prof. Jeans in *The Mysterious Universe* (p. 29), "science can no longer shut the door on this possibility: she has no longer any unanswerable arguments to bring against our innate conviction of free will." (There were 173 replies in favour of Free Will to 7 against; nearly 25 to 1 this time.)

The chief "recent remarkable development" for the support of this Free Will victory for God is Heisenberg's discovery that electrons jump about in a manner which cannot be causally determined. It has been found impossible to determine simultaneously the energy *and* the position of a particle. Pending the advance of our knowledge, Heisenberg, who, in fairness, it must be said, is no doddering mystic, but a young scientific worker of the best type, described this as the "Principle of Indeterminancy." Thereupon, all the parsons, the Eddingtons, Lodges, &c., thrilled by the very word "indeterminancy," rushed in to find justification for free-will. The ridiculousness of this was well-exposed in the columns of *Nature* by Professor Turner, who wrote pointing out that the meaning of the word indeterminate had nothing in common with the theological interpretations. All it meant was that it was not as yet possible to determine this behaviour of the particle.

But the trick is illustrative of the theological anxiety of these scientists and shows what substance there is in their claim that "remarkable recent developments" have revealed the presence of God in the atom, and so on.

In answer to the question: are the "recent remarkable developments" of science favourable to religious beliefs?, only 27 of the 200 Fellows answered in the negative. The shallow, empirical materialism donned by the bourgeoisie earlier in its history has fallen like a pack of cards. "Yes," replied Sir James Ewing, "very favourable. They have convinced the intelligent public of the futility of the old-fashioned 'materialism'" To be sure "materialism" is no longer the fashion; but only a Marxist can explain why.

The whole present weakness and decadence of the bourgeoisie is revealed in this; that when its scientists make advances in their work which destroy former notions, because they have no confidence, no guts, no vision (no regenerate social future), they fly at once into Black Magic. The discovery of the indeterminancy of the electron is not an urgent

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call, confidently followed, to advance further into the materialist exploration of the thing-in-itself; it is not regarded, as Einstein puts it, a temporary asylum of ignorance soon to be left behind, but instead, as the scientific crack of doom, which sends these "scientists" scurrying through the portals of theological obscurantism.

The Rev. Drawbridge has certainly let down the draw-bridge (if the pun is forgivable), which permits us to enter and view that great castle of learning, the Royal Society. Over a hundred years ago, at a period, the beginning of the capitalist era, when social foundations were also shaking, and great transformations were either in process or imminent, members of the Royal Society perpetrated a series of Bridgewater Treaties "on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation." These activities reflected the anxiety of still-feudal minds at the contemporary social disintegration and transformation. But the similar activities of the authoritative members of the Royal Society to-day are the reflex of an era of social change of infinitely vaster historical significance. All these metaphysical attempts to secure mystical final explanations arise from the eternal desire of the human soul to abolish all contradictions (as Engels pointed out in *Feuerbach*). And if ever a class was impelled with the desire to solve the contradictions that ever more numerously and formidably beset it, that class is the bourgeoisie to-day.

The conditions of capitalist decline as we have seen, have produced this present-day attack of the bourgeoisie on science, this over-whelming sickly cast of theology from the scientists and ideological leaders of the bourgeoisie. But the same conditions and their nauseating effects are also producing a genuine revolt, a healthy ferment among many younger scientists and intellectuals. The opposition of many of these yet remains completely valueless—still based on an obsolete mechanist materialism, and so on. More and more, however, sections of scientific workers are realising that the struggle against theology, in defence of scientific advancement, becomes the struggle against the politics of the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, against the capitalist régime. It becomes clearer and clearer to them that to-day only the Soviet Union and the World Revolutionary Movement is the true defender and custodian of science and culture. They belong to that regenerate section of the bourgeoisie, spoken of in the Communist Manifesto, whom events have taught that only by throwing in their lot with the struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat can they, in this period, do anything that becomes a man.

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MARX AND ENGELS ON IRELAND

By T. A. JACKSON

[*We start this month the first of a series of three or four articles giving extracts from the correspondence of Marx and Engels, illustrating their attitude on Ireland. These extracts have been made by T. A. Jackson, who has also provided an introduction and explanatory notes. Most of the letters have been specially translated and, except where otherwise stated, are from the German edition of the Correspondence between Marx and Engels now being published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.*]

ALL who know anything of the political relations between Ireland and Britain know that the present dispute between the Irish Free State and the National Government is only one more dispute in an historical series which can be traced back for centuries.

Karl Marx and his friend and collaborator, Frederick Engels, between them lived in England with only brief intervals during the course of three major Irish crises.

Engels, in the 40's, lived through the crisis of O'Connell's " Repeal " agitation (against the Act of Union, and the beginnings of the famine of 1846-8. Pre-occupation with the development of the Communist League and of the Revolution in Germany prevented him from giving very close attention to Irish affairs—and even then to consider them only in so far as they concerned the Chartist movement, of whose revolutionary potentialities he thought highly.

During the critical years from 1844 to the latter part of 1849 Engels, with Marx, was absorbed practically, as well as theoretically, in the continental revolutionary movement. Not until after the passing of these critical years, that is, by 1850, were Marx and Engels both domiciled in England and freed from continental preoccupation sufficiently to give their attention to Ireland and its relation to Britain. By then the immediate Irish crisis had passed.

Absorbed in political journalism and in economic studies—Marx exclusively so, and Engels all the time he could steal from his business—both the friends became interested in Ireland, firstly, as throwing light upon the development of British capitalism; secondly, as providing data which Engels, later, used with telling effect in his essay on the " Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State."

Their interest became acute with the coincidence of a fresh Irish crisis—the rise of the " Fenian " movement—with the formation of the

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International Working Men's Association (I.W.M.A.) in September, 1864. The " Fenians " attempted an insurrection first in March, 1865, then in September, 1867. Both attempts proved abortive; each produced the usual crop of State trials and malignant sentences—and in September, 1867, occurred the famous incident of the Manchester Rescue—the rescue of two Fenian chiefs from a prison-van in the streets of Manchester—in the course of which a policeman was shot, and for which three Irish Fenians were hanged.

Marx, the leading spirit in the newly-formed I.W.M.A., seems early to have seen the revolutionary significance of the Fenian movement. Naturally, the " Fenians " (officially the Irish Republican Brotherhood) being a secret society, no correspondence is extant to establish any direct connection; but there are clear indications that from as early as 1864 the Fenians in London, Manchester and elsewhere found the I.W.M.A. a convenient camouflage and recruiting ground, and that conversely they aided the establishment of branches of the " International " in Dublin and Cork, as well as in Pendleton, Manchester.

Marx actively interested himself and the I.W.M.A. in securing the support of the British Radicals and workers for the Fenian victims of British imperialism—especially so after the Manchester rescue and the judicial murder of the three " Manchester Martyrs."

The correspondence between Marx and Engels is full of indications of this interest, and Marx's letters to Kugelmann define his attitude towards the Irish Republican struggle with precision. Marx's efforts continued through the agitation for an " amnesty " for the Fenian prisoners, and these efforts had their repercussions in the struggle with the Bakunists inside the International—one of whom, Robin, in the *Egalité*, published in the winter of 1869-70 a series of articles attacking the Central Council (*i.e.*, Marx) in the course of which he said that their action in publishing a manifesto in defence of the Fenians was " stupid."

With 1870 came the Franco-Prussian war, which led eventually to the Paris Commune of 1871, soon after which the International broke up. Moreover, in September, 1870, Engels moved from Manchester to London and the correspondence between the friends, which had been a matter of almost a daily exchange of letters, became almost wholly a verbal one.

Affairs in Ireland did not become acute again until the end of the 70's—when the co-incident, but not directly connected rise of Parnell in the Parliamentary Nationalist Party and the formation by Michael Davitt of the Land League in 1879 brought the Irish Land Question again to a head. By then, however, Marx was struggling against continuous ill health and what attention he could give, and that of Engels,

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was almost completely monopolised by the formation of the National Socialist, Social-Democratic, and Labour parties on the Continent and in America. Nevertheless their continued interest in Ireland is attested by several letters of importance as for instance the letters of Engels to Bernstein in 1881.

After Marx's death in 1883, Engels, as is well known, became absorbed in the task of preparing the second and third volumes of *Capital* for the press. Moreover, the transformation of the Irish struggle after 1882, from a directly agrarian into a predominently parliamentary one, may have caused it to lose interest in his eyes. His correspondence for the period from 1885 to 1895—the year of his death—has it would seem been imperfectly preserved. He could hardly have failed to comment on the two Home Rule Bills of 1885 and 1893, or upon the Land Acts of 1891.

It will be seen that a prime source of information upon the attitude of Marx and Engels towards the " Irish Question " is their correspondence which has not yet been fully translated into English. Moreover, this correspondence is richest for the period of the Fenians—the militant Irish Republicans, whose outlook and methods most closely resemble those of the Irish Republicans of to-day.

This resemblance is much more than a superficial one. In 1862-5 the American Civil War not only shut off the normal flow of emigration from Ireland to the U.S.A., and simultaneously the return of remittances from the emigrants to their homes in Ireland which were of vital importance to the poorer peasant farmers: it also precipitated an economic crisis in Britain, which cut off the openings for casual labour in its labour market and harvest fields. The rise of the Fenian movement has its base in this crisis. Rigidly Nationalist in form, Fenianism was noticeably proletarian, and revolutionary in its content—alike in respect of the social composition of its forces, and in its attitude towards landlordism and clericalism.

A similar recurrence of economic crisis affecting both Britain and the U.S.A. has produced the neo-Fenianism of recent years in Ireland. Again, emigration to the U.S.A. has been checked; again the flow of remittances from the U.S.A. has been cut off; again the British labour market fails to provide an escape for the " redundant " population. Predominantly agrarian though the immediate objectives of this neo-Fenian movement may be, and agrarian likewise the centres of its agitation, it is like its predecessor clearly marked with proletarian characteristics.

For these reasons the correspondence of Marx and Engels on Ireland seems well worth a study; and it is proposed therefore to give in the LABOUR MONTHLY a selection of the more important references to be found therein. The extracts are given in chronological sequence and such notes as may be necessary are added.

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ENGELS' TOUR IN IRELAND IN 1856.

MANCHESTER.
May 23rd, 1856.

DEAR MARX,

In our tour in Ireland we went from Dublin to Galway on the west coast and then twenty miles north inland, then to Limerick and down the Shannon to Tarbert, Tralee, Killarney and back to Dublin again. In all we travelled about 450 to 500 English miles in the country itself and have thus seen about two-thirds of the whole country.

With the exception of Dublin, which bears the same relation to London as Dusseldorf to Berlin, and has throughout the character of a one-time small capital and built in an entirely English style, the whole country, and especially the towns, look like France or Northern Italy. Police, priests, lawyers, bureaucrats, owners of demesnes are there in delightful profusion, but there is a total absence of all and every industry so that it would be hard to understand how all these parasites live, were it not that the poverty of the peasants supplied the corresponding contrast.

" Strong measures " are visible in every part of the country. The government meddles in everything, there is no trace of the so-called self-government. It can clearly be seen that Ireland is the first English colony and one which is still ruled directly in the old way on account of its proximity. Indeed it can be noted here that the so-called freedom of the English citizen depends on the oppression of the colonies. In no land have I seen so many police,[1] and the drink-sodden type of the Prussian gendarmerie has been developed here to perfection into a constabulary armed with carbines, bayonets and handcuffs.

A distinctive feature of the country is its ruins, the oldest of which date from the 5th and 6th centuries and the most recent from the 19th century, with all the intervening periods represented. The most ancient are churches only ; but dating from 1100 there are castles and churches ; and since 1800, peasants' cottages. Throughout the west, but especially in the region round Galway the country is covered with such ruins of peasants' cottages, most of which have been abandoned since 1846.[2]

I had never believed that famine could have such palpable reality. Whole villages are deserted and between them lie the splendid demesnes of the petty landlords, mostly lawyers, almost the only people who live there now. Famine, emigration and *clearances* have together brought this about. Here there are no cattle in the fields. The land is a regular wilderness which no one wants. In County Clare to the south of Galway things are somewhat better. There are still cattle there and towards Limerick there are hillsides excellently cultivated for the most part by Scottish farmers ; there the ruins are cleared away and the land looks

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civilised. In the south-west are many mountains and bogs, but also a marvellously luxuriant growth of timber forests and, after this, splendid grazing again, especially in Tipperary; and, around Dublin, a country which obviously is gradually falling into the hands of the large farmers.

The country is completely ruined by the pillaging wars of the English, lasting from 1100 to 1850. (They have actually lasted this time, and the "state of seige"[3] on the top of it.) Most of the ruins are known to have been destroyed during the wars. It is this that has given the people themselves their distinctive character. With all the national fanaticism which the people have acquired, they feel no longer at home in their own country. *Ireland for the Saxon!* That is now being achieved. The Irishman knows that he cannot compete with the Englishman with his superior weapons against him in every respect; emigration will continue until the predominating, indeed, almost exclusively Celtic character of the population has gone to the devil. How often have the Irish begun to achieve something and each time they have been crushed, politically and industrially. They have been artificially transformed by persistent and thoroughgoing oppression into a completely demoralised people and are now notoriously fulfilling the rôle of providing England, America, Australia, &c., with whores, day-labourers, bullies, pickpockets, swindlers, beggars, and other demoralised elements. This demoralised character persists also in the aristocracy. The landlords, everywhere else "bourgeoisified," are here completely demoralised. Their houses are surrounded by enormous and wonderful demesnes: but outside these, the country is a desert, and where their money comes from is nowhere to be seen. These fellows want shooting. Of mixed blood, mostly big, strong, handsome scoundrels, they all wear colossal beards under enormous Roman noses and put on the pseudo-military airs of retired colonels, travel over the country after every sort of pleasure and, if you make enquiries, they haven't a half-penny, but a pile of debts, and live in fear of the *Encumbered Estates Court.*

I must tell you later about the manner in which England rules this country—repression and corruption—Bonaparte tried it, a long time ago,[4] and will do it again, if you don't come up here soon. What about it?

Yours, F. E.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

[1]The police in Ireland were of two kinds. The larger towns such as Dublin, Belfast, Limerick and Cork had their town police. The countryside and the smaller towns were policed by the Royal Irish Constabulary, a semi-military force officered from the British Army List. In 1852, four years before Engels' visit, the R.I.C. numbered 12,501, distributed in 1590 stations, giving an average of 48 stations to each county and 8 constables to each station. Part of the force was mounted. All habitually carried arms—carbines, ball cartridges and bayonets for the infantry; carbines, pistols, and sabres for the cavalry—on occasion cutlasses were also served out. The population of Ireland

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at the census of 1851 was 6,515,794. At the time of Engels' visit it was probably only a little over 6 millions. For comparison we note that the police force (unarmed with firearms) for Greater London in 1932, with a population of 8,202,818 was 20,274.

[2]The Great Famine of 1846-8 was attributed to the potato blight. The actual deaths from famine and famine-fever have never been established with complete accuracy. What is certain is that whether by death or emigration the population was reduced from a little under nine millions to a little more than six-and-a-half. One contributory cause of the desertion of homesteads was the " quarter-acre clause," which forbade the giving of poor law relief to any holder of more than a quarter-acre holding. The explanation of the " ruined " cottages noted by Engels may not have been perceived by him at the time. To prevent the homesteads from being re-occupied the landlords, aided by the police, removed the roofs, windows and doors of all such dwellings as fell into their hands by these defaults.

[3]" State of seige "=virtual martial law.

[4]This sentence is obscure in the original, but the allusion is clearly to Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III.), who in the period of his Presidency of the Second French Republic (1848-1852) issued a series of statements in which he outlined a world-policy for the re-establishment of " Napoleonic France." In the course of the articles, which dealt with each of the victors of Waterloo in turn, " Bonaparte "—as Marx and Engels, like all revolutionary republicans continued to call him—dealt with the methods of English rule in Ireland and the possibility of repeating the French aid given to the United Irishman of 1798. Nobody took these flamboyancies seriously, least of all Marx and Engels ; but the trick of posing as a friend of Socialistic-revolutionaries and as an agrarian reformer, was so much a stock-in-trade with Louis Napoleon that Engels' jest has a spice of earnest in it.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE HESITANT MATERIALIST.

The Nature of Living Matter. By Lancelot Hogben. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., London.) 1930. 15s.

THE biggest advances in scientific knowledge during the present century have been made chiefly in the fields of physics and biology. The new conceptions introduced by the revolutionary discoveries in physical science have been widely popularised and the " crisis in modern physics " has been sufficiently exemplified by the controversies still proceeding and the attempts to use the new ideas for support of various philosophical tendencies. A new interest is now arising in the considerable progress of scientific research in various fields of biology and attempts are beginning to be made to draw wider conclusions from them and to assess their bearing on particular philosophical outlooks. Among a number of works of this kind which are now appearing, the book under review must be accorded a special importance. More than others, it demands criticism and consideration from the point of view of Marxism.

In the first place, the author is a leading authority in his own particular field of experimental biology and his wide reading and alertness to the developments of modern scientific research render him specially qualified to act as an exponent of the results of recent biological enquiry and as a guide to the trend of biological research to-day. In the second place, the author attempts to run counter to the prevailing tendency of science in the present epoch of decaying capitalism in which science uses its results to buttress the worst reaction and loses itself in mystical degeneration. Finally, the book is important because it attempts to tackle fundamental questions and, in so doing, expresses a philosophical attitude which is, in many ways, typical of the most vigorous elements of the younger generation of bourgeois scientists. It is an outlook which derives from the equivocal class position of these workers, reflecting, on the one hand, the hostile reaction to the religious-reactionary distortion of capitalist science and, on the other hand, the separation from the revolutionary forces making for the new social order which would make possible complete throwing off of the fetters of capitalist ideology and understanding and adoption of the scientific outlook of dialectical materialism.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first section is headed " Vitalism and Mechanism." Disregarding the essay character and ignoring for the moment the philosophical reflections, this part of the book may be said to be devoted essentially to expounding the work of Pavlov and Morgan and the advance of physico-chemical methods of investigation in biology. It includes also a chapter on adaptation which is in many ways a separate paper which could well be included in the next section. This chapter is a particularly stimulating and fresh discussion of an old subject and is striking evidence how the recent trend of experimental biology runs counter to old established ideas.

The second part is concerned with the modern critique of Darwinism. This is carried out very adequately from the point of view of experimental biology and here also a reader belonging to the older generation may find his cherished beliefs strongly assailed. The author lays particular stress on the

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fact that the fight over the religious and social implications of the doctrine of organic evolution during the last century (arising from failure to recognise that biology no less than physics is an " ethically neutral " science, as the author puts it, though a Marxist would phrase it differently) prevented attention from being directed to putting evolution on the plane of an exact science, which is only now taking place.

It is when we come to the third part, entitled " Holism and the Publicist standpoint in philosophy," which goes more fully into the philosophical standpoint of the author (together with many incidental observations and reflections on education, religion, and other subjects) that the fundamental inadequacy of this standpoint becomes most apparent. Against the prevailing fashionable form of subjective idealism and vitalism, the " holistic " philosophy of Smuts and Haldane, the author puts forward his compromise of " publicism " which seeks to evade the basic philosophical issue between materialism and idealism. He declares :

> The only philosophy for the plain man who wants a plain answer to a plain question is some sort of compromise between the standpoint of transcendental metaphysics and mechanistic science. (P. 221.)

This compromise is to be found in the " Public World " of science, made up of the common ground of communicable knowledge where " neither Mind nor Matter is fundamental ; what is ultimate is Behaviour." Again, in the introduction to this section Hogben declares :

> For the purpose of discourse we have to assume that the neutral ground is the real thing. In private we are at liberty to reject this view.

Thus, not only is there a sphere set apart for each person for his " private " world of religious beliefs, &c., but even the public world need not necessarily be regarded as the " real thing." He admits that this view is essentially the same as the view of the " external world of physics " propounded by Eddington (*The Nature of the Physical World*), the only reason for the new name being that in the case of the biologist the object of investigation includes his own person ; even though he has to admit also that Eddington nevertheless comes to the conclusion of " a universal Mind " as " a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory."

Hogben considers that he has done away with the traditional " dualism of Mind and Matter." Actually, his standpoint is a half-hearted evasion. It is a variety of agnosticism with all the characteristic marks of cowardice and compromise of this philosophy. In effect it surrenders to religion and idealism on the plea that it is a " private " matter. Like the Machists, Hogben frequently relies on Hume. Like them, also, he takes his " public " world as the common ground of individual consciousness instead of taking experience as the mutual interaction of external nature and human consciousness.

At the same time, the author considers that his view, while not materialist in the philosophical sense, nevertheless represents a practical materialist or rather mechanist outlook since it builds on the results of experimental scientific investigation. Just as holism avoids the pitfalls of the cruder forms of vitalism, so, he says, " in a similar way, publicism is a modern development of the mechanistic conception of life." (P. 298.) Here we come to the second important aspect of the author's philosophy, viz., the attitude to the conflict of vitalism and mechanism, which, of course, cannot rightly be separated from the relation to the issue of materialism as a whole. This question of vitalism and materialism is the connecting thread in the first part of the book and is further dealt

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with at the end. It is easy enough to combat vitalism as the transparent cover for fideism, but, while for practical purposes Hogben declares himself a materialist, his materialism with all its qualifications is still nothing more than the naive " vulgar " materialism of the scientist engaged in scientific research. In fact, his whole tendency is to hark back to the eighteenth century materialists and to lay stress on the reduction of all phenomena of life to terms of physics and chemistry. It is true he announces his refusal to state dogmatically that this will ever be realisable. But he goes on to say.:

> I am content to foresee enormous possibilities for the extension of physical interpretations of the properties of living matter. I fail to see how human knowledge will progress on any logical assumption but that implied by the principle of mechanism in its most general terms. (P. 290-291.)

And elsewhere he states :

> We can at least envisage the possibility that biology will advance towards a comprehensive account of the properties of living matter without interpreting its observations in a manner different from that adopted in physics. (P. 51.)

We do not desire to underrate in any way the services that Professor Hogben has rendered as one of the few progressive forces in the British scientific world. He is conducting an important fight against reaction on a very wide front of scientific enquiry, ranging from vitalism to anthropology, eugenics and education. Nor, of course, does Marxism deny the fertile field existing for the application of physico-chemical methods of investigation to living organisms. But the crude undialectical materialism which is implicit in the mechanistic outlook of Hogben is inadequate and unscientific. It is impossible here to go into the whole question, we will limit ourselves to a bare mention of some of the defects of his view :

(1) In trying to avoid the defects of naive metaphysical materialism, he has to leave a loophole for entry of all forms of subjective idealism, vitalism, &c.

(2) Physico-chemical laws are to be taken as the only ones.

(3) All complex phenomena are to be reduced to simple ones.

(4) The whole is declared to be nothing more than the sum of the parts (note, for instance, the definite statement on page 96).

(5) The barren view that all movement must be reduced to mechanical movement ; consciousness also to be interpreted in this way.

(6) No understanding of the necessity for determining the appropriate special laws for each sphere.

(7) In opposition to the vitalists who make an unbridgeable gulf between life and non-life, he sees only the similarity explicable in the same terms for both.

We could continue but it would be out of place to continue the catalogue in terms of dialectical materialism. Professor Hogben in his book has only begun to cut himself off from the ideologues of capitalism in natural science. He has not even shown an understanding of the class character of scientific theory. He even commits himself, on the last page of the book, to the statement that " human nature . . . is on the side of vitalist theories." But the reason for the half-hearted and inadequate mechanistic standpoint, the reason that the mechanists, behaviourists, reflexologists and their school among the younger generation in England have not gone beyond vulgar materialism is largely to be found in the backwardness of scientific Marxist theory in this country. It is the task of Marxists to show the possibility and necessity for making this advance and to examine all the achievements of modern scientific research in the light of dialectical materialism.

CLEMENS DUTT.

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THE INVENTIONS OF MR. MAXTON

Lenin. By James Maxton. (Peter Davies.) 5s.

THIS book is an outrage; but it is a significant outrage; it has a part to play. One can gain an inkling of what that part is without reading a line of the book. Study the reviews, of which the bourgeois press has been prodigal. Note their uniform tone of eulogy. Observe the unstinting praise of such a journal as the literary supplement of *The Times* and the manner in which it speaks of Maxton as the leading disciple of Lenin in this country.

It is clear, from this, that the book's aim is to present to English readers Lenin and Leninism, distorted out of all recognition through I.L.P. spectacles, as the real thing. The book, written by the leader of the I.L.P., takes its place as part of the new "revolutionary" trickery of that Party's leaders.

An inquiring worker might, in all innocence, read Maxton's book believing it to be in some way authoritative. And what will be his final impression? That there was a man called Lenin who was a Great and Good Man (with rather shocking and unnecessary ideas about violence), who after working out "in the abstract" an elaborate series of political principles, was able by the exercise of remarkable energy to make himself the "unchallenged ruler" of Russia in place of the Tsar and to begin introducing Socialism.

This is not a parody. It is a perfectly fair summary. And the conclusion which the inquiring worker will draw will be first, that without a Lenin there can be no revolution, second, that it may be possible to reach Socialism without having a revolution at all, third, that it is too early to make up one's mind anyway ("we are still too near . . . to venture final assessments"). Into such a fog of charactersitic I.L.P. confusion does Maxton's contemptible book lead.

From start to finish the revoltingly Philistine pages of this book testify to the abysmal ignorance of the author. The very elements of the subject of which he pretends to treat are unknown to him. This man, with a generation as a professional politician behind him, is ignorant of plain facts which are a matter of common knowledge to the simplest worker in the Soviet Union who has gone through his first elementary course in "political literacy."

He does not know that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the keystone of Marxism, as Marx himself explained; instead he gives a preposterous "summary" of Marx's theory in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is never once mentioned.

Nowhere does he show that Leninism is Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, that Leninism is therefore "the theory and tactic of the proletarian revolution in general and the theory and tactic of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular" (Stalin); instead he is concerned to present Lenin as a kind of *deus ex machina*—he calls him "the new dictator," and one wonders why he does not cut the cackle and, like any counter-revolutionary hack, say the "Red Tsar" straight out.

He lets fall no hint of the supreme teaching of Lenin on the Party; how capitalism cannot be overthrown, the proletarian dictatorship established and Socialism built, without the building of a powerful revolutionary Party of the working class; how that Party must be rooted unshakably in the masses and at the same time be their fighting vanguard; how that Party cannot be built without a relentless fight against every deviation and distortion of theory and practice, against every variety of opportunism.

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The crass distortion of the whole meaning of Leninism involved in Maxton's concealment of the Party is fundamental. To separate Lenin from the Bolshevik Party is impossible; but that is Maxton's line. Lenin, the individual is the one who does everything. He (Maxton declares) had to carry through the whole revolution " with practically nothing but his own brain, his own will-power and a theory " (p. 156). " He " decrees it is " his " power, " he " dismisses the Constituent Assembly, it is " his " mandate from the people: this is typical of the whole tone of the book. Could vulgar and illiterate Philistinism go further than this unspeakable twisting of Lenin into a kind of melodramatic benevolent autocrat?

Of course Maxton cannot avoid mentioning the Party once or twice; but it is always introduced as a sort of secondary affair, something that Lenin had to have as an instrument to carry out his will. It first appears as the " band of assistants " whom Lenin had " enlisted and trained " (p. 12); later it turns out to be a collection of " raw recruits " on the one hand and " theory-ridden " older members on the other (pp. 156-7); or it is just, in the language of the gossip paragraph, Lenin's " Socialist agitator friends " (p. 161).

Enough has been said to expose the true nature of this impertinent farrago; and literally every page contains analogous monstrosities. Alike on Leninist theory, in all its phases, and on the history of the Russian Revolution, this book reeks from beginning to end with grotesque errors.

Take a few historical points. To Maxton the student disturbances under Tsarism are on a level with the " rags " at British bourgeois universities (pp. 20-1), though to the merest half-wit it is evident that a political demonstration is different from an outburst of hooliganism. All he has to say about the Populists and Lenin's historic fight against them is that they were " mistaken Socialists " (p. 34). He airily dismisses Lenin's use of " legal Marxism " and presents Lenin as being mainly concerned with illegal work, when Lenin always fought to the bitter end for every legal possibility of work while combining this with illegal work—one of his most important teachings, as everybody knows (pp. 35-6). The origin of the Soviet Maxton finds " obscure " (p. 88), though it is well-known that the first Soviet sprang from the council of deputies from the mills and factories in Ivanovo-Voznesensk during the great strike of 1905. He repeats the ancient lie that the New Economic Policy was " a *volte-face* with a vengeance " (pp. 166-7). He declares that natural conservatism helps to maintain the Soviet Power (p. 170), when conservatism—which is incidentally not " natural," but is a social phenomenon—is being fought tooth and nail in the Soviet Union to-day in the process of the building of the new Socialist order.

So thick and fast do the errors grow that it is most convenient to give them in tabular form :—

MAXTON	THE FACTS
The membership of the Bolshevik Party in 1905 " did not reach 10,000 " (pp. 122-23).	In the revolutionary period of 1905-6 the membership of the Party was 150,000.
The Zubatov (police) Unions were first formed on the eve of the 1905 revolution (pp. 78-9).	The Zubatov Unions were founded at the beginning of the century, and reached their height in 1902-3.
January 22, 1905, the day of the great massacre outside the Winter Palace, " has gone down to history as ' Red Sunday ' " (p. 79).	January 22, 1905, has ever after been called " Bloody Sunday " (the adjective " krovavoe " means bloody, not red).

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MAXTON	THE FACTS
Lenin practised law at Samara (on page 30), and at Samarkand (on p. 31).	Lenin practised law at Samara.
The Constituent Assembly " had been elected in conformity with the best democratic models " (p. 157).	The Constituent Assembly had been elected on out-of-date Party lists which ruled out any expression of the big Left split in the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the main party of the peasantry and the biggest single Party.
The U.S.S.R. is described as " the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia " (p. 169).	The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics embraces seven republics, of which Russia (R.S.F.S.R.) is only one.
" Stalin and his fellow Commissars " (p. 169).	Everyone knows that Stalin is not a Commissar, and holds no Government position: he is general secretary of the C.P.S.U.

But enough of these howlers ! And now for some theoretical points. The vital question of the peasantry is slurred over in one casual paragraph. *The national and colonial question, of the very greatest importance, is not even once mentioned.* Individual terrorism and revolutionary parliamentarism are confused, incredible though it may seem (p. 19). Maxton seeks to palm off the erroneous theory of inevitable capitalist collapse as Marxism—Marx, he says, foretold that capitalism " would certainly and surely destroy itself," and there would come a " day when its own contradictions decreed its end " (pp. 27-8).

Finally, on the supreme issue of war, Maxton descends to political forgery in an effort to justify his Party ; in a quotation from Lenin a comma is discreetly inserted, which has the effect of completely destroying the sense of the original and making it appear that Lenin characterised the I.L.P. as revolutionary internationalists who were seriously struggling against war (p. 120). This was the exact opposite of Lenin's view.

It is with no surprise, after all this, that one notes that in the bibliography such rubbish as Marcu and Fülöp-Miller are duly listed, while Stalin's classic *Leninism* finds no place.

To expose every detail of Maxton's falsifications, errors, and sheer ignorant twaddle would require a book twice as long as his ; but sufficient has been said here to demonstrate the utter untrustworthiness at every point of this I.L.P. misrepresentation of Lenin, which is nothing but an insult to his life, work and principles.

G.A.H.

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Economic Conditions in the U.S.S.R. A Handbook for Foreign Economists, Specialists and Workers. U.S.S.R. Chamber of Commerce. (Kniga.) 856 pp. 4s.

The Marxist Quarterly. Editors: E. Kanter, D. Silver. 25c., $1 per ann. S. Stone, 114-116 E. 26 Street, New York City, U.S.A.

We Have Paid Enough ! Europe's Demand for Freedom from War Debt Bondage. A Message to America. By Frederick E. Coe. (Simpkin Marshall Ltd.) 129 pp. 2s.

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If We Want Peace? By H. N. Brailsford. (Hogarth Press.) 64 pp. Cloth 2s. 6d. Paper 1s. 6d.

Red Russia. By Theodor Seibert. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. (Allen & Unwin.) 418 pp. 15s.

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